

**LIVING ON THE EDGE OF  
ETERNITY**

**BILL RUDGE**

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**LIVING TRUTH  
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## **The Last Days**

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## **Living On the Edge of Eternity—The *Last* of the Last Days**

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# Table of Contents

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|                                                                                    |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Acknowledgements                                                                   |  |
| It Caught My Attention                                                             |  |
| The <i>Last</i> of the Last Days                                                   |  |
| Only God Knows the Future                                                          |  |
| Mountain Peaks of Prophecy                                                         |  |
| End Times Prophecy in the New Testament                                            |  |
| Will This Generation See Revelation Fulfilled?                                     |  |
| Christ's Return—Preparing for the Bridegroom                                       |  |
| Signs of the Times                                                                 |  |
| Four Abominations                                                                  |  |
| Amazing Prophecies                                                                 |  |
| 9/11 and End-Time Prophecy—A Biblical Perspective of the September 11<br>Terrorism |  |
| The Foundation of America                                                          |  |
| How Long Can America Stand?                                                        |  |
| Is Judgment Coming to America?                                                     |  |
| Hezekiah Speaks                                                                    |  |
| The Rapture—Where Have All the Christians Gone?                                    |  |
| One-World Government                                                               |  |
| Unity of Religion                                                                  |  |
| The Unholy Trinity                                                                 |  |
| The Antichrist and False Prophet                                                   |  |
| Mystery Babylon and the Apostate Church                                            |  |
| Israel in Prophecy                                                                 |  |
| Coming Persecution                                                                 |  |
| Gospel Proclaimed Worldwide                                                        |  |
| Tribulation Judgments                                                              |  |
| Seven “Fights” with Satan                                                          |  |
| Gog and Magog                                                                      |  |

[Overview of the Tribulation and End Times](#)

[Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ](#)

[Hitler and the Antichrist](#)

[Judgment Seat of Christ](#)

[The Millennium](#)

[Great White Throne Judgment](#)

[New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem](#)

[When Will You Believe?](#)

[God Is In Control](#)

[Champions in the End Times](#)

[As You See the Day Approaching](#)

[Experience His Reality](#)

[Overview of Revelation](#)

[For More Information](#)

# Acknowledgements

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This book is a compilation of information and insight from over 50 years of Bible study and research. Thank you to everyone who may have directly or indirectly contributed to this book. Perhaps it was a message I heard, a book or article I read or through a conversation that has proven valuable to me through the years and has made its way into this book. Some sources are unidentifiable because of when or how the information was obtained—oftentimes, many years ago and, sometimes, just from memory. Therefore, I wish to thank all, acknowledged or unacknowledged, for your contribution in any way. The Lord knows who you are, and it is His recognition that is of utmost importance.

I pray this book prepares you, not only for what is ahead, but to meet the One who inspired all Scripture, including end-time prophecy. It was compiled over a period of several months with late nights and early mornings and much prayer, fasting, biblical study and research. I must have fallen on my knees over a thousand times while writing this and other books to ask for the Spirit's help, inspiration and anointing.

This book on the end times is just one of several books I was simultaneously writing, updating or expanding; all of which are a “sacrificial offering” of my time, energy and resources in love and appreciation to my Lord, Savior and coming King! Also, a special thanks to my wife Karen who allowed me to spend thousands of hours of our personal time to write this and other books over a two-year span. A special thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers who helped with typing, checking Scripture references, proofreading, design and in many other ways. A special thanks to my eleven grandchildren who served as an occasional oasis by drawing me away for a much needed diversion.

# It Caught My Attention

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Shortly before my grandmother, Aurie Bombeck, died when I was five, she made mention of the book of Revelation—something I vaguely recalled about a coming Tribulation period and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. At that young age, and for many years after, it was of little significance to me.

As a youth, I was involved in séances and Ouija boards in hopes of contacting my younger brother Jeffrey who was hit and killed by a car at the age of seven, five years after my grandmother died. I wanted to know what lies beyond the grave and to see into the future, so I dabbled in various forms of fortunetelling and other occult practices while trying to discover hidden knowledge and powers.

However, God dramatically intervened in my life when I was 18 after I heard an evangelist speak on amazing prophecies in the Bible. The message that Sunday night in May 1971 brought back vivid childhood memories of what my grandmother had told me when I was five years old. Listening attentively to what the Bible had to say about the future was fascinating. It caused me to consider the claims of Jesus Christ and surrender my life to Him that very night. I began a lifetime journey of studying eschatology. The word eschatology is from a combination of two Greek words: *eschatos* (meaning “last” or “final”) and *logos* (“a branch of knowledge”). It is the study of the end times—the final judgment and destiny of humanity.

My grandmother had planted the seeds in my heart which God later used to create within me a love for Bible prophecy—both Messianic prophecies that were fulfilled at Christ’s first coming and prophecies about the end times concerning Christ’s Second Coming. Studying biblical prophecy has been a passion of mine since becoming a Christian.

# The *Last* of the Last Days

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The terms “last days” and “last hour” refer to the entire church age beginning with Pentecost (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 John 2:18). I am convinced, however, that we are rapidly accelerating toward the culmination, or *last* of the last days period, and the promised return of Jesus Christ.

## Panorama

After leaving the Temple complex and crossing the Kidron Valley, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, giving His disciples, and all of us through the Bible, an astonishing panorama of the end times (Matthew 24). He forewarned that the time just before His return would be the most difficult and distressing in all of human history. Leading up to those desperate days will be what Jesus refers to as the “beginning of birth pains”: great deception; wars and rumors of wars; earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places (Matthew 24:6-8; Mark 13:5-8; Luke 21:8-11; see also Revelation 6:1-8).

These “beginning of birth pains” are followed shortly by:

- unprecedented natural disasters across the planet
- escalating activity of evil spirits, wickedness, immorality, violence and persecution
- an increase in lawlessness which “will cause the love of many to grow cold”
- widespread apostasy (falling away from the faith)
- a totalitarian government led by a world leader (Antichrist) and a deceptive religious leader (False Prophet)
- terrors and great signs from heaven

This may not be the scenario we want, but it is what Scripture reveals.

The good news is that, in spite of the hatred, betrayal and persecution of Christians, the Gospel will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. The greatest revival in history will occur at this time of tribulation. The establishment of Christ’s long-awaited Millennial Kingdom (a period of a thousand years) is on the foreseeable horizon and will commence at His Second Coming.

## Seemingly Impossible to Ever Happen

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, I shared with many people, and often spoke about, what I saw coming in the future such as extreme weather conditions, widespread pestilence, unrestrained immorality, violence and sorcery; America declining as a world power while Europe (revived Roman Empire) will rise as a super power; a one-world government and one-world monetary system under the leadership of a person identified as the Antichrist; a one-world religion headed by the False Prophet; apostasy in the church as the religion of Babylon (New Age, occultism, sorcery, paganism) will infiltrate every aspect of society—including the church; hostility toward, and persecution of, Christians in the U.S.; a seven-year peace treaty with Israel, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem; the inability to buy or sell without a mark (666) on your right hand or forehead; the focus of all the world on Israel; one day, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies, as well as other prophecies foretold in the Bible.

Most people thought it was impossible for these things to ever happen. Even in the 1990s and the first two decades of the 21st century, many Christians still felt this way—although they had a temporary scare with 9/11.

While most thought that end-time prophecy from the Bible could never happen forty, or even ten, years ago, many now believe it is inevitable. Global government, an international monetary system and unity of religion are on the horizon. It is incredible that the geopolitical world today is focused on the tiny nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Plans are underway to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The technology to implant identification information in the human body and to monitor every person alive on this planet is available. Threats of a nuclear holocaust and Armageddon loom on the horizon. On and on we could go as what was once considered “science fiction” and figurative language of Revelation has the potential to become a literal reality in our lifetime.

## Extreme Perspectives

There are two extreme perspectives many Christians have regarding the end times. There are those who want to quit their job, sell everything they own and isolate themselves in a commune or in the woods to await Christ’s return. Then, there are those who are so caught up in the cares of the world that they are indifferent and undiscerning of the signs of the times.

Instead of either extreme, we should have a biblically balanced perspective: watching and preparing as though Christ is coming today but making full use of every opportunity to advance the Gospel until He does come.

## Prophetic Date Setting

Some “prophets” have set dates concerning when Christ would return, but

they have all been wrong. It is disconcerting when a supposed Christian leader gives a specific date for the rapture or the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Therefore be on the alert [stay awake], for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matthew 24:36, 42).

Prophetic date setting not only exposes one’s ignorance of Scripture, but it also makes Christians seem foolish and the Bible unreliable to an unbelieving world. So, before someone else comes along to make such unbiblical claims, may I suggest that the person(s) making these declarations sign over their home and belongings for someone else to take possession the “day after” the date they give. If they are not convinced enough to do so, then their date setting is best left unstated so as not to discredit themselves or the body of Christ.

Instead of revealing the precise time of His return (Acts 1:7), Jesus’ emphasis regarding the end times was on faithfulness, watchfulness, stewardship, expectancy and preparedness (Matthew 24:42-51). While Scripture does indicate we cannot know the exact day or hour, we *can* recognize the “season” and identify the “generation” of Jesus’ return by observing the “signs of the times.” Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because, while they could discern the signs related to the weather, they could not discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:1-4). Let us not be like the Pharisees but let us remember Jesus’ parable of the fig tree:

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things [the signs foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-31], recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place (Matthew 24:32-34).

These signs are not meant to pinpoint a specific date but to let us know the “generation” and “season” of His return and give us discernment amid the growing deception that arises before the Second Coming.

## Identifying the Antichrist

There are also those who attempt to identify the Antichrist, but they, too, have been proven inaccurate. Many people are deceived by false revelations and miscalculations, leading them to unscriptural and sensationalized conclusions. Calling themselves “Christians,” they spout off fraudulent and inaccurate claims. The world, seeing the ludicrous nature of these claims, lumps all Christians believing in end-time prophecy together and labels us as mindless fanatics. Consequently, many reject the Bible and do not recognize the genuine, undeniable signs recorded in Scripture that are happening before our very eyes.

## Taking Scripture Out of Context

A recurrent teaching that takes Scripture out of context is in regard to an “elite army of overcomers,” also known as “Joel’s Army,” who will subdue the enemies of Christ before He returns. Instead of warning the body of Christ and the world about what the Bible foretells is assuredly coming and the apostasy that is already upon us, these so-called “prophets” mislead their devotees with false prophecies and empty promises. They proclaim that we are on the verge of a great spiritual revival that will Christianize the world. Once these overcomers conquer the world, Jesus will come back, so they can victoriously deliver the Kingdom over to Him.

While I do believe that “we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37) and that God “always leads us in triumph in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14), the opposite of their prophecies will come to pass. They apparently overlook such verses as: “He [Antichrist] will speak against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One” (Daniel 7:25); “[A]s soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed” (Daniel 12:7); “It was also given to him [Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them” (Revelation 13:7). Although believers will be victorious and “overcame him [Antichrist] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death” (Revelation 12:11), the victory over Satan and his cohorts and the conquest of the world that they prophesy will not transpire until the Second Coming when “the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring [Antichrist] to an end by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Those who think that Christ will come back after His followers have taken over the world had better take another look at Revelation 6 to 19, 2 Thessalonians 2, Daniel 7, 8, 11 and 12, Matthew 24 and numerous other scriptures that paint an entirely different picture of the end times.

In an attempt to neutralize biblical prophecy and confuse the body of Christ with false prophecies and erroneous end-time scenarios, Satan inspires “prophets” with false revelations that conveniently skip the Tribulation period and the persecution of believers. Instead, they coddle their followers with appealing prophecies of conquest and victory, peace and prosperity, while ignoring the Bible’s warning of persecution, deception and a great falling away (apostasy) prior to the return of the Lord. They hinder the biblically illiterate and spiritually blind from recognizing how close at hand God’s judgment really is. It is as Paul said:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

There is yet another danger to their distortion of end-time scripture. In my estimation, they are actually conditioning people to accept the coming Antichrist who will usher in what will initially appear to be an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity—a seemingly global revival of love and unity. The dire consequence of these erroneous and unbiblical prophecies is that, when unrelenting difficulties and persecution arise, many confused “Christians” will feel that God has forsaken them and has not kept His promises. But, they are not God’s promises, they are merely the words of misguided prophets.

## Do Not Add or Take Away From God’s Word

During his temptation of Eve in Genesis 3, Satan twisted, added to and took away from what God said to Adam. No wonder God repeatedly warns us not to twist, distort, take out of context, add to or take away from His Word. Revelation 22:18-19 should be a strong caution to us all not to distort, denigrate or deny prophetic Scripture:

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

We must not carelessly speculate or attempt to make prophecies fit the current headlines—thus twisting or adding to Scripture. Nor should we deny or change the meaning of prophecies, that in context indicate a literal meaning—lest we become guilty of taking away from God’s prophetic Word.

The book of Revelation promises that those who read, hear and keep (follow) it will be blessed (Revelation 1:3, 22:7). The pastors reading Revelation to their congregations, and those reading it on their own, will be blessed. Notice that it does not say, “Blessed are those who understand it,” because there are many aspects of Revelation we will not understand until they begin to unfold, then you will understand.

Many messianic prophecies concerning Yeshua (Jesus) in the Hebrew Scriptures seemed difficult to make sense of until they were fulfilled. Those alive at the time of Christ, who recognized His first coming, were able to do so because they knew and believed the messianic prophecies that were being fulfilled. Likewise, we might not comprehend all of the prophecies of Christ’s Second Coming until they happen. But, we can know the “season” of His Second Coming by recognizing end-time prophecies which are being fulfilled.

## Biblical Worldview Crucial

It is crucial for every believer to have a Biblical worldview and understand

the scriptural end-time scenario. Your investment in Bible study and research will be richly rewarded with insight and understanding. You will gain discernment in the midst of confusing times and peace from knowing the answers to life and eternity.

Prophecies of Christ's first coming seemed confusing and contradictory until they were fulfilled. Likewise, prophecies concerning His Second Coming—clouded in mystery—are beginning to make sense. As events continue to unfold, these biblical prophecies will become crystal clear.

Those who know the Lord and His Word will discern the signs of the times and will have the wisdom and strength to stand firm. Be prepared for what is most assuredly coming—spend time in His Word and in prayer.

# Only God Knows the Future

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*Dr. BJ Rudge shares some important insights in this chapter about the only One who really knows the future.*

Newspaper and magazine headlines, television, radio and internet news confront us daily with accounts of conflicts and war, carnage from terrorism, mass murders, threats of a nuclear holocaust, global economic upheaval, worldwide spread of disease and pestilence, devastating natural disasters and extreme weather. The constant barrage prompts questions such as, “Are we living at the time of the end of the world and what is the meaning of all that is happening?”

People search for answers in a variety of sources from science to astrology, psychics and Nostradamus. However, there is only one Source that truly provides the answers. God alone knows the future, and He reveals it in the Book He inspired. Only God knows the end from the beginning and only the Bible reveals an accurate end-time scenario. Isaiah 46:9-10 states:

Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, “My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.”

Scripture is the only reliable source of end-time prophecy, and Revelation is the capstone of that prophecy. Not only has Scripture proven to be amazingly accurate, but the Lord provides tremendous peace through His Word. Not only do we know what is going to take place, we know the One Who is in control and Who determines our eternal destiny.

Since only God knows the future, we must go to His Word to acquire an accurate end-time scenario. Let us not only saturate our lives with study of the Bible—our only reliable source of end-time prophecy—but also trust the Author of Scripture with our lives, our future and our eternal destinies as we look for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## The Important Book...

The book that best gives us insight into future events on God’s prophetic timetable is Revelation. It was given to Christ by God the Father, and it was

communicated to the Apostle John by an angel (Revelation 1:1). It provides us with detailed information about events that will precede the return of Jesus Christ in all His glory.

The outline for Revelation is found in the following verse: “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things” (Revelation 1:19). In this outline, we find the following three-fold division:

1. Past—The things which you have seen (Chapter 1)
2. Present—The things which are (Chapters 2 and 3)
3. Future—The things which will take place after this (Chapters 4 to 22)

Revelation is one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible. The images and symbols contained within its chapters seem to create more questions than answers. Many avoid opening the pages to this final book of the Bible because they believe it is shrouded in mystery. One of my college roommates told me his father, who is a pastor, never preached from Revelation because, in his estimation, no one could understand its meaning. While there certainly are many views set forth concerning this book, there are essential reasons why every believer should read Revelation.

First, Revelation is part of the Word of God. Thus, it is profitable and beneficial for every believer (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Second, Revelation reveals Jesus Christ in all His glory. This book opens with the following verse, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The Greek word for revelation is *apokalupto* from which the English word apocalypse comes. This word means “an uncovering,” “an unveiling” or “a disclosure.” Thus, we find in the opening verse of Revelation that it is an unveiling or revealing of Jesus Christ. In all the uses of “revelation” in the New Testament, it refers to something or someone, once hidden, becoming visible (Ex: unveiling of spiritual truth—Romans 16:25; Galatians 1:12; revealing of the sons of God—Romans 8:19; Jesus’ incarnation—Luke 2:32; and Jesus’ glorious appearing at His Second Coming—2 Thessalonians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:7).

In the Gospels, Jesus is pictured as a suffering servant who sacrificially gives up His life for the sins of mankind. In Revelation, Jesus is not pictured as a humble suffering servant but as the reigning King and Judge over all the Earth. Therefore, just as Peter, John and James received a glimpse of Jesus’ glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36), Revelation reveals to each believer the full glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Revelation provides a message of hope: Jesus is coming back (1:7). He is in sovereign control of all the events of human history and the ultimate doom of evil is certain. Some claim the overall purpose of Revelation is God’s judgment. They see this book as a message of doom and gloom. Although it cannot be

denied that there is a theme of judgment in the book, this is certainly not the overall purpose. The overall theme of Revelation is Christ's victory. The book of Revelation is a reminder not only to the churches of Asia, but to all believers, that, in the end, Christ will be victorious and will reign as King. This revelation to John was meant to encourage and comfort the believers of the seven churches (and all believers in general) as they faced persecution and to motivate them to continue to persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ. Even though they were surrounded by suffering and persecution, they could rest on the promise and hope that Christ will be victorious in the end.

Third, a special blessing is promised to all those who read and heed Revelation. Revelation is the only book of the Bible that begins and ends with a promise. "Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it" (Revelation 1:3); "Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7). Revelation 1:3 is the first of 7 beatitudes in the book: 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14.

Everyone should be aware that Revelation also comes with a warning label. The first part of this warning is for those who add to what God has revealed (Revelation 22:18). Those who allow current headlines to guide their understanding of Scripture, instead of letting Scripture give understanding to current events, add to the book of Revelation. Despite the statement by Jesus that no one knows the day or the hour (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32), "prophetic" date setters claim to have special spiritual insight and wisdom privileged only to them as to the exact day when Jesus will return.

There have been (and will be) many "prophets" who have set dates for Jesus' return or various other prophetic events that were never fulfilled. Not only do date setters and self-proclaimed prognosticators add to what God has revealed in Scripture, they contradict what Jesus told His disciples about His return: "For this reason you must be ready as well; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew 24:44).

The second part of the warning is for those who take away from what God has revealed (Revelation 22:19). People who take away from Revelation are those who either spiritualize the prophecies in the book or diminish their importance for the church. Those who spiritualize the book of Revelation strip the prophecies of any significant meaning and leave the understanding of this book to the opinions of the interpreter. This results in a variety of unbiblical teaching such as the belief that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ has already occurred and that we are currently living in the New Heaven and New Earth as described in Revelation 21 and 22.

In his bestselling book, a well-known pastor wrote that Jesus taught His disciples that the details of His return were none of their business. Thus, he argued that we should not be concerned about end-time prophecy. Although many set dates, make absurd predictions, add to or subtract from God's Word, the prophecies contained within Revelation are so important to the life of the believer that God opens and closes it with a special blessing to those who read, hear and obey them (Revelation 1:3, 22:7).

Revelation reveals the next events on God's prophetic timetable. As noted in the final chapter, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (22:10). The Greek word for "time" used in this verse is *kairos*, which means "epoch, era or season." Thus, Revelation contains the next epoch, era or season on God's prophetic timetable. In contrast to Daniel, who was told to seal up the words of his prophecy (Daniel 8:26, 12:4-10), John was told not to seal the words of the prophecy in Revelation. Why read Revelation? Because it is coming. And, when it does, you will understand if you have studied the book.

These prophecies in Revelation contain much symbolism that will have a future fulfillment. The meanings of words change, while symbols, signs and images remain the same. Keep in mind that John is an eyewitness of future events which he is trying to explain in first century AD language. The revelation of John was expressed in terms reflecting his own culture but will find its final and complete fulfillment in the end times. Envision that you lived during the time of John when every machine was attached to an animal. An oxen pulled the plow, a chariot was pulled by a horse, et cetera. Then, you were given a vision where you saw weapons of warfare and advanced technological machines of the 21st century, and you described your vision using your first century vocabulary. That is one reason why Revelation contains so much symbolism. But, it is symbolism or figurative language which has a meaning and fulfillment in reality. Besides, how could John describe the indescribable beauty of Heaven or global catastrophes he never saw or could even imagine?

The above are just a few reasons why the book of Revelation and end-time prophecy should be read and studied by every believer.

## A Biblical Understanding of Prophecy

We find ourselves asking the very same question the disciples did in Matthew 24, "When is Jesus going to come back?" It is no surprise then that many of us are anticipating that the Lord will return very soon, as current events reflect the very signs Jesus said would precede His return (Matthew 24:4-8). Therefore, as Jesus highlights in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25), we should "be on the alert" [stay awake, watch], for we do not know the hour of His return (Matthew 25:13). However, as we stay awake and prepare ourselves "for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (Titus 2:13), let us take care that we wait within the guidelines of what God has chosen to reveal to us in His Word.

I say this because many Christians are being persuaded to build their eschatology (issues related to the end times) upon extra-biblical sources. While I do not deny that truth can exist outside of God's Word (in fact there are instances in Scripture where writers quote from ancient books, such as Jude 14-15, which appears to take a quote from the pseudepigraphal Book of Enoch), we must remember that God's Word must always be our foundation in shaping our understanding of end time events. As we are warned in the most detailed prophetic book on the events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, we

should not add or take away from what God has revealed (Revelation 22:18-19).

## Extra-Biblical Prophecies

The year 2012 will be remembered as being a year of doomsday predictions. The highlight of these predictions was the supposed Mayan apocalypse of December 21. Worldwide attention was focused on this date as scholars from a variety of fields, such as religion, science, archeology and history, produced numerous articles, books, documentaries and movies about this possible doomsday scenario. While this prophecy had no connection with the Bible, I was amazed by how many “Christian” prophecy experts tried to draw parallels between the December 21 prophetic event and the prophecies revealed in the Bible. This gave one the impression that the Bible did not sufficiently reveal the events surrounding Jesus’ return. Instead, we had to rely upon other non-biblical sources to really understand when Jesus was going to return.

I have encountered Christian material on the Second Coming that suggested Nostradamus, the Hopi Indians, Jewish mystic rabbis and occult mediums as being authoritative sources on end-time events. However, God’s Word must define our understanding and be our primary source in shaping our understanding of future events.

As we anticipate the return of Jesus Christ, we can rest upon the promise that what God has chosen to reveal about the Second Coming will come to pass. Even though there are some details we cannot fully comprehend until they happen, we can (and are responsible to) have a proper understanding of future prophetic events from studying Scripture.

# Mountain Peaks of Prophecy

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The world is rapidly changing. Events once thought unbelievable are happening at an incredible speed as we near the “beginning of birth pains.” When Jesus said in Revelation 22:12, “Behold, I am coming quickly,” I believe imminence is the issue, and, when the final events of His Second Coming begin to happen, they will unfold swiftly.

We are in the foreshadow of a coming new world. However, before Christ’s Millennial Kingdom is ushered in, there will arise a counterfeit new world order. In preparation for this, we are seeing changes in virtually every aspect of our culture and society—media, technology, family, education, medicine, health, government, politics, economics, morality, nature and religion. To be uninformed of the implications of what is ahead could mean disastrous consequences.

Where is all this change taking us? What does it mean? It seems like the world is decisively and swiftly approaching some future destiny, but what is it? Are we living in the last days?

Over 50 years of Bible study and research have provided me with insight on end-time prophecy, some of which I offer in this book to both inform you and help prepare you for what is coming.

## Insight from the Himalayan Mountains

While speaking at a large convention in the Himalayan Mountains, my son, another team member and I walked to a lookout spot where we could see Mount Everest and other prominent peaks of the Himalayas. Although we could not see everything (such as the lower peaks or the valleys between the mountains) we were able to see some significant summits from that vantage point.

This chapter will provide a vantage point of the prominent peaks of end-time prophecy with a brief synopsis of each one. Then, throughout the following chapters of this book we will cover in more detail these, and other, prophetic mountain peaks of end-time events. So, open your Bible and come along on an enlightening prophetic journey to discover what is ahead for the body of Christ, the apostate church, Israel and the world.

## Deception and Delusion

Avoiding deception is one of two main exhortations in the New Testament regarding the end times. Jesus warns about false prophets and false christs in

Matthew 24:5, 11 and 24. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-12, the Apostle Paul cautions against “the apostasy and signs and false wonders.” In 1 Timothy 4:1, he warns about “deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul reveals that there will be those who “will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” The “deception of wickedness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10) includes widespread apostasy and a strong delusion for those who refuse to love the truth.

In Revelation 13:13-14 and 19:20, the Apostle John informs his readers that the inhabitants of the Earth during the Tribulation will be deceived because of the signs that the False Prophet performs in the presence of the Antichrist. The Antichrist, who receives his authority from Satan, will proclaim himself to be God and seek control over and worship from every human being on Earth (2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 13). In the midst of imitation and counterfeits, one of the greatest needs for believers is discernment.

## Perseverance

Perseverance is the second of the two main exhortations regarding the end times—repeated several times in Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture. Admonitions to endure to the end, be patient, do not shrink back, hold fast, be faithful unto death, hold on, overcome and persevere obviously infer times of great trial, trouble and tribulation, and the need for determination and tenacity.

## Beginning of Birth Pains—Signs of the Times

Jesus compared the signs of His return with a woman going through birth pains (Matthew 24:8). The closer she gets to delivery, the more frequent and intense are her contractions and pain—until finally the child is born. Likewise, the more frequent and intense the indicating signs become, the closer we are to the Lord’s Second Coming. Some of those signs are: deception that will result in many being led away from Christ; wars and rumors of wars; famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places; persecution of Christians; betrayal and hate of one another; lawlessness that will abound causing the love of many to grow cold.

Nature seems out of control as we are seeing record-breaking—sometimes bizarre—weather. Recent years have witnessed some of history’s fiercest hurricanes, tornados, volcanoes, droughts, tsunamis, heat waves, wildfires, floods and mudslides; earthquakes in diverse places; widespread famine, plague and pestilence; an increase of attacks on humans by carnivorous animals. Nature seems to be moving toward what Revelation indicates will occur during the Tribulation period. The shaking of the heavens and the earth (Haggai 2:6; Hebrews 12:26-28) testify that cataclysmic global events and cosmic disturbances (sun and moon darkened, stars falling from the sky and every island and

mountain being removed from its place—Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:13-14) are on the near horizon. These cataclysms in the nations and cosmos are preliminary to the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Rampant violence is another sign of the end times. In Noah's day, the world was filled with violence:

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:11-13).

As in Noah's day, there is widespread violence today which often leads to bloodshed, and "blood pollutes the land" (Numbers 35:33). Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6) and nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom (Matthew 24:7) are the norm for this day. In the New Testament and in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, the word translated "nations" is from the Greek root word *ethnos* (a group of people who are associated by some shared characteristic, whether geographical, familial or tribal), from which we get the English words ethnic and ethnicity. (The dictionary definition of ethnicity is "the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.") "Kingdom" is from the Greek root word *basileia*, denoting the territory or people over whom a king rules. We see many armed conflicts in the world today.

In contrast to the prophesied wars and rumors of wars and nation rising against nation, the Apostle Paul tells us that "while they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). Scripture seems confusing at this point. How could it indicate the world would be filled with violence, then, on the other hand, reveal that people would be saying "Peace and safety!"? But, in our generation, many unclear scriptural prophecies are beginning to come into focus. We are seeing the rampant violence throughout the world, however, we are also seeing a growing movement for global peace and unity. Many are wrongly convinced that we are not headed for Armageddon, but we are about to usher in an age of peace and prosperity. Scripture indicates this false peace and unity will be short-lived.

Unrestrained sexual immorality is yet another sign of the end times. In spite of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, damaged relationships and a host of other adverse consequences, today's generation pursues a hedonistic lifestyle and flaunts forbidden passions. Scripture reveals that, during the Tribulation period, people will refuse to repent of their sexual immorality (Revelation 9:21). What do we see today? A world given over to lust and every sexual perversion imaginable. We are living in a day and age when those who have restraint, discipline and control, and who are not indulging in the

lusts of the flesh, are to be archaic and unenlightened. Those exercising no self-control over their passions, having no inhibitions and indulging in every lustful desire conceivable, are praised for being liberated and free. We are seeing a reversal of values today as the prophet Isaiah describes:

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21).

Never forget that one of the main strategies of the enemy is to get people so caught up in seeking pleasure and self-gratification that they have no time for God. They are too busy to study His Word and recognize the signs of His coming, and they are too occupied and insensitive to hear His voice convicting them of sin and bringing them to repentance.

### Israel—Restored May 14, 1948

For 2,500 years, there was no independent nation of Israel. Yet, God's prophets foretold that events in the end times would focus in and around the tiny nation of Israel. The restoration of modern-day Israel as a nation was a prophetic miracle (although many see it as a "catastrophe"). Scripture foretells that the Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

### America—Her Decline and Demise

America has been the greatest nation in the history of the world. Built upon the principles in God's Word, she has seemed invincible. Once honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, she now forsakes and rejects the ways of the One who has blessed and protected her. America is hardening her heart to the God of the Bible and enthusiastically embracing beliefs and practices contrary to His nature and will. Accordingly, the testimony of Scripture, the lessons of history, the remedial judgments and the witness of God's Spirit announce America's inevitable fate—unless she speedily and earnestly repents.

### One-World Government, Monetary System and Religion

We are rapidly, and systematically, moving toward a new world order and the establishment of a unified global society. A scenario is unfolding on the world scene, as Revelation foretells, to form a one-world government with a universal monetary system and an ecumenical religious system supposedly offering tolerance and acceptance for all. Those with a global agenda have relentlessly pursued this goal—manipulating the people of the world through their

propaganda in the media.

Many of the world's political and religious leaders are crying out, "We are not merely dealing with national crises, we are facing catastrophes of global proportions unless we unite for the common good of the world. We need a world leader—whether he or she be from God or Satan—to solve global problems." However, this anticipated golden era of peace, prosperity and unity will become the darkest hour humankind will ever experience.

## Mark of the Beast (666) and Image of the Beast

This global system, having power and control over politics, finances, armed forces and religions, will ultimately lead to the "mark of the beast" (666) and the worship of the Antichrist's image.

Revelation 13:14-15 indicates that the False Prophet's ultimate goal is to coerce and force the inhabitants of the Earth to worship the Antichrist:

And he [False Prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast [Antichrist], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Revelation 13:16-18 makes known how the Antichrist and False Prophet will obtain and maintain control of this global society:

And he [False Prophet] causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast [Antichrist] or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six [666].

## The Rapture—Jesus Will Return

Although there are various opinions regarding the timing of the rapture (pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation or pre-wrath tribulation), it is an assured biblical promise. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, true believers will be caught up (raptured) when Jesus descends from Heaven. Those who

“sleep” (have gone to Heaven before us) will rise first, and those of us who are alive will be next. From this time forward, we will always be with the Lord.

## Apostasy—Babylon the Great—The Spiritual Prostitute

According to biblical researcher Jim Weikal, “Ancient Babylon was located about 50 miles south of modern-day Baghdad, Iraq, along the Euphrates River. The prophet Daniel, as well as hundreds of other Jews, were deported to this great city. Babylon was established during the 19th century BC in the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers known as Mesopotamia ‘the land between two rivers.’”

Out of religious deception, compromise, wickedness and apostasy will arise what the Bible describes in Revelation 17 and 18 as “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5). The evidence of this apostasy (great falling away) is clearly visible today as multitudes turn to New Age spirituality, paganism, idolatry and occultism. This universal apostate church and global religious system laced with sorcery and the worship of demons (Revelation 9:20) will be headed by none other than the False Prophet whose main mission will be to influence and force the world to worship the Antichrist.

## Love of Many Will Grow Cold

As lawlessness and wickedness increase across the globe, many people will abandon the faith and become hostile toward each other. Mark 13:12-13 gives us a glimpse of this difficult time:

Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Luke 21:16-17 reiterates:

But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name.

## Persecution of Christians and Jews

Society is becoming increasingly hostile to anything they consider offensive in the Bible. This generation seems determined to kick God out of every aspect of public life, and if possible, private life as well, while embracing virtually

everything that is contrary to Christianity. Persecution of believers in Christ will reach its consummation with the Antichrist and False Prophet who will oppress and martyr those who do not take the mark of the beast or worship his image.

In every phase of life today, Christians are being pressured to compromise their biblical beliefs and conform to the new cultural standards. Morality and virtue are mocked and ridiculed. Scripture is being undermined, both in the secular world and by many supposed Christian leaders. Violence in the media is desensitizing young people and adults to accept brutality as a normal way of life. Christians and Jews are being labeled as the world's troublemakers—deserving of harassment and hostility. Love and unity are considered the supreme good; division is evil. Therefore, Christians who refuse to unite with this new world order—for the common good and salvation of our planet—are divisive, judgmental and evil; they are the real antichrist.

## Gospel Preached Throughout the World During Time of Persecution

In the midst of apostasy and persecution, God will use various means to reach the unsaved of this world with the Gospel during the Tribulation. He will use the testimony of the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:3) to convince many Jews and Gentiles that Jesus (Yeshua) is the promised Messiah. The witness of the 144,000 Jewish believers from all the tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4) will be instrumental in countless more people coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Faithful followers during the Tribulation will not deny Christ—even in the face of death—but will be empowered to maintain their testimony for Jesus and the Word of God. An angel will also be used by God to proclaim His eternal Gospel during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 14:6-7).

## The Tribulation—God's Wrath on Unbelievers

The God of the Bible is loving and merciful, but He is also a God of justice and righteousness who will not tolerate sin and rebellion. Scripture repeatedly indicates that although He is gracious and long-suffering, God will not hold back His hand of judgment forever on those who willfully continue in wickedness. The Tribulation is when He will act against sin and defiance, against those who persist in evil, against those who blaspheme His holy name and against those who attack and harm His people. This is the time when God will intervene as the righteous Judge to execute His just and devastating punishment.

## Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Jesus will return in great power and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. With merely the words of His mouth, He will swiftly defeat the Antichrist and False Prophet as well as the armies of the world gathered together with them at Armageddon.

## The Millennium

The Millennium is a 1,000 year period where Jesus Christ rules and reigns on earth. Satan will be bound and thrown into the abyss (bottomless pit) during this time. All the prophecies and promises to the Jews and Gentiles in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) not fulfilled at Christ's first coming will be fulfilled during His thousand-year reign of righteousness, peace and joy.

### Judgment Seat of Christ and Great White Throne Judgment

Believers in Christ will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ concerning rewards for faithful service; their eternal destiny with Christ assured. Unbelievers face a terrifying judgment known as the Great White Throne Judgment. Its sentence is irrevocable. The destiny of all who appear before it will be the lake of fire.

### Paradise Restored—The New Jerusalem and Eternity

Paradise will be restored! Everything lost at the Fall will be regained for all eternity. Suffering and death will be forever banished from our human experience. Access to the tree of life, which was banned in the Garden of Eden, will be restored. This is our Blessed Hope.

# End Times Prophecy in the New Testament

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## Matthew 24 Corresponds to the Book of Revelation

Jesus' words in Matthew concerning the "beginning of birth pains" parallel the prophecies found in Revelation. The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21) is probably the most significant prophetic scripture in the New Testament, other than the book of Revelation. Comparing Matthew 24 with passages from Revelation offers an overview of the end times. Where there are not matching scriptures between these two books, other scriptures have been used.

Revelation 6:1-8 foretells Jesus opening the seven seals of a scroll at the beginning of the Tribulation period. With the opening of the first four seals, four horses of different colors come forth with riders who are given various powers over the Earth.

### Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse First Seal—Rider on White Horse—Deception

Matthew 24:4-5, 24-25:

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads [deceives] you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ [Messiah],' and will mislead many. For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance."

Revelation 6:1-2:

Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Deception will increase, leading to the arrival of the rider on this white horse (Antichrist), who is a false christ. An increasing move toward a false unity and peace, which the apostate church will wrongly discern as revival, will occur. There will be an escalation of false signs and wonders.

## Second and Third Seals—Riders on Red and Black Horses—War and Famine

Matthew 24:6-8:

And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains.

Revelation 6:3-6:

When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius [equivalent to a day’s wages]; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”

There will be an increase of wars and rumors of wars as the rider on the red horse removes peace from the earth. Large numbers of people will slay one another as Antichrist’s illusory peace morphs into worldwide war and massacre. Earthquakes will also increase and intensify worldwide. Famine will occur in various places across the earth as the rider on the black horse comes forth. Warfare and violence will destroy much of the food supply causing shortages and famine.

## Fourth Seal—Rider on Pale Horse—Persecution and Martyrdom of Believers

Matthew 24:9-13:

Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Revelation 6:7-8:

When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

This cadaverous (yellow-tinged green) color suggesting decaying flesh, symbolizes the name of the rider: Death—with Hades (the place of the dead) following him. Over a fourth of the Earth will be killed with sword, famine, pestilence and savage animals. Currently, one fourth of the world's population would be 2 billion people. Plagues will follow that will kill one third of the still existing population (Revelation 9:18).

The remaining seals of the scroll Jesus opens foretell other aspects of the Tribulation period.

### Fifth Seal—Souls of Martyrs

Revelation 6:9-11:

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Revelation 13:9-10:

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword

he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

Worldwide persecution of true believers in Christ is intensifying. It will reach its apex with the Antichrist and False Prophet who will persecute and martyr those who do not receive the “mark of the beast” or worship the image of the Antichrist.

## Gospel Preached in the Whole World

Matthew 24:14:

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Revelation 14:6-7:

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

The greatest revival in history will occur during the Tribulation period. Despite the deception of false teachers and false prophets, persecution of believers, wars, natural disasters and fearsome trials, the Gospel will be proclaimed throughout the entire earth.

## Abomination of Desolation

Matthew 24:15-16, 21:

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet [Daniel 11:31, 12:1], standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

At the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation, the Antichrist will desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem by displaying himself as being God (2 Thessalonians 2:4) and demanding to be worshiped (Revelation 13:15). Spurned by the Jews,

the Antichrist will initiate the worst persecution of the Jews in the history of the world. They would be annihilated (reduced to nonexistence) if those days were not shortened.

## Sixth Seal—Signs in the Sun, Moon and Stars

Matthew 24:29:

But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Luke 21:25-26:

There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Revelation 6:12-17:

I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Cataclysmic signs in the heavens and on Earth will increasingly intensify as God's judgment and wrath is meted out on a wicked and rebellious world and on those who have taken the mark of the beast. The opening of the sixth and seventh seals will lead to the trumpet and bowl judgments (listed in Revelation 8 to 16) with their culmination at Armageddon.

## Seventh Seal—Further Judgments

When Jesus opens the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1), additional judgments commence (trumpet and bowl judgments) in intensifying waves, bringing many to repentance and purifying this Earth of its defilement and corruption in preparation for Christ's return and His Millennial reign.

Revelation 8:1-5:

When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

## Christ's Second Coming

Matthew 24:30-31:

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Revelation 19:11-21:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written,

“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Jesus Christ will return in great power and glory at Armageddon. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be defeated. Vultures will gather to eat the carcasses of those assembled to fight against the returning Christ. Satan will be bound for a thousand years. The Millennium will ensue as the “birth pains” give way to the birth of God’s Kingdom, thereby literally fulfilling Revelation 11:15:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.

# Will This Generation See Revelation Fulfilled?

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God's Word intends for every generation of believers to anticipate and be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible promises that Jesus is coming back, but how can we know when? To make it harder to discern, an endless array of "false prophets" have wrongly predicted when the rapture would occur or who the Antichrist would be. I believe Satan raises up such people and gives them false revelations to discredit genuine biblical prophecy.

## Hoped, Watched and Waited

Throughout history, each generation of believers hoped, watched and waited—but they all passed without witnessing the fulfillment. Are we just another such generation? Or could we be the one foretold of in Scripture in which Revelation and other end-time prophecies will be fulfilled?

Do the recent natural disasters and other "signs of the times" have prophetic significance? Are they a precursor to something much bigger? Or is this all merely a coincidence or just another cycle the Earth is going through? While some scientists attribute our extreme weather conditions to global warming and climate change, the Bible foretold (thousands of years in advance) of "birth pains," consisting of out-of control weather and a period of unequalled distress preceding the golden Messianic age.

Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus' disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age? Jesus gave them a panoramic overview of the end times. Included in His discourse was that "wars and rumors of war, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places" would be the "beginning of birth pains [beginning of sorrows]" (Matthew 24:6-8).

Such events have occurred throughout history (characteristics of a fallen world) and many people wrongly concluded they were the generation to see Christ return. But, never before in history have we seen such an increase in both frequency and intensity of these and many other biblical signs. No other generation has witnessed the simultaneous coming together of so many prophetic events. Our generation has more potential than any other to see the actual fulfillment of biblical prophecies and Christ's Second Coming.

Thousands of years ago, Scripture gave descriptions of the "signs of the

times” to identify the “generation” of when Jesus would return. Jesus indicated that, although we cannot know the day or hour, we would be able to recognize the “season” of His coming (Matthew 24:32-36). Although we cannot know the exact day, we can biblically discern the “generation” and the “season” of when the return of Jesus Christ will be fulfilled.

A modern fireworks show can be likened to the prophetic “birth pains” foretold by Jesus. Those of us who have been to a fireworks event know that the first display in the sky will ultimately lead to the sensational grand finale. So too, “the beginning of birth pains” are the start of God’s prophetic clock, leading us to the spectacular return of Jesus Christ at Armageddon.

## Surreal

The many biblical prophecies and “signs of the times” that are lining up cannot be excused as mere coincidence; they are proving to be amazingly accurate (unlike vague and erroneous predictions by “false” prophets). The surreal imagery in Revelation and other prophetic scriptures seemed like science fiction for centuries but is becoming more feasible and realistic to our generation. It is undeniable that the world is progressively, and decisively, becoming like what Revelation and other biblical prophecies describe.

For almost 2,000 years, there has been no reasonable possibility for the literal fulfillment of Revelation—descriptions and details in this book were considered by past generations to be science fiction because they were so far-fetched. As a result, many spiritualized it or believed it was fulfilled in AD 70. Just read some of the ancient commentaries. However, there is little doubt our world is at a pivotal point in history and heading toward transformation and cataclysmic events. Signs are occurring simultaneously and intensifying—like birth pains (Matthew 24:8). Many of these events happening on this planet seem surreal. How and why are all these things occurring?

As I have previously noted, in order for end time prophecies to be fulfilled, Israel had to be restored as a nation. This was miraculously accomplished in 1948. It is more than coincidental that we are seeing the beginning stages or potential fulfillment of virtually every end-times prophecy dealing with the coming of Christ. It now seems inevitable that the prophecies of Revelation will occur in our lifetime.

## We Are The Generation

I have spent over 50 years doing research and study on biblical prophecy. For many years, I told people that Revelation was still far in the distance because there was much in my estimation yet to line up. However, everything is now coming into alignment. There are still a few pieces of the prophetic puzzle that need to come together to provide all the details described in Revelation—some of which may not be fully understood until actual fulfillment—but prophetic

scripture is coming into clearer focus every day.

If we are the generation to see Revelation fulfilled, then we should see undeniable signs indicating that our society and world are moving toward the direction described in Revelation and other end-time prophecies. And, that is exactly what is happening. This “tidal wave” of Bible prophecies, which seemed so far offshore just a few decades ago, is rapidly approaching the shore. Once seemingly incomprehensible and impossible prophecies to ever be fulfilled are lining up. The world’s spiritual, economic, political, military, moral, cultural and weather conditions, as well as other biblical signs, attest to this.

Let me ask you a question. What end-time prophecy in Scripture does not have the potential of being fulfilled in the foreseeable future? You will be hard pressed to find even one. However, if we are not the generation which will witness the return of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Revelation, then we are an amazing similarity, an exact duplication in every aspect of the biblical description of the generation that will. It cannot be denied that what is happening to today’s generation is an astonishing reflection of the biblical description of the generation that will. No other generation before us has had all of the prophecies simultaneously lining up for potential fulfillment the way our generation does. There seems little doubt in the light of God’s Word from the “signs of the times” that we are the “generation” who is living in the “season” of the “end times.”

## Heading To Judgment

While the term “last days” refers to the entire church age since Pentecost, the Apostle Paul gives indicators that will proliferate as we near the end of the church age:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power; avoid such people as these (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

The depths of depravity to which our nation and this world are descending is disheartening to those who love Christ and His Word and cherish truth and righteousness. As our decadent society free-falls into the chaos of unrestrained, out-in-the-open, uninhibited, gratuitous immorality, brutality, sorcery, thefts, lies and profanity, the masses will ignore these prophecies foretold in Revelation and throughout the Old and New Testaments.

As Jesus’ promised return draws near, God’s Spirit is bringing as many to salvation as will heed His beckoning call. God is loving, merciful and long-

suffering and has already delayed the unleashing of His wrath. In His desire for people to come to repentance, He is orchestrating, increasing and intensifying signs of impending judgments spoken of in Revelation and other prophetic scripture, intended to bring those who will to repentance while cleansing the Earth of the evil that has defiled it.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (2 Peter 3:9-14).

Open your eyes and you will see clear indications that cataclysmic events are on the horizon, to be meted out to a world that denies its Creator, blasphemes His name, distorts His truth, perverts His ways, disobeys His commandments, rebels against His standards, opposes His Word and persecutes His followers! Unless there is widespread, genuine repentance, this generation is rapidly heading to judgment.

## Be Assured, Jesus Will Come Again

While many people waste their time viewing images on the internet and watching movies laced with violence, immorality and sorcery, others study Scripture and end-time prophecy. Who will have discernment as prophetic events continue to unfold?

Jesus said, "But when these things [signs of His coming] begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). In the day and age we live, it is of utmost importance to get our hearts and lives right with the Lord and study His Word, then, no matter what happens, we will have discernment, wisdom, peace, courage and strength in the midst of it.

Be assured, Jesus Christ will come again and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over the entire Earth and all creation. Those who have put their faith in Him as the promised Messiah, Savior and Lord, will experience indescribable peace and joy throughout the Millennium and Eternity!

May all of God's people be "awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:7). "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21).

# Christ's Return—Preparing for the Bridegroom

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*This chapter is excerpted from the September 2022 Decision magazine article by Joseph M. Stowell and is used by permission (© 2022 all rights reserved).*

I've known about the Second Coming of Jesus ever since I was a boy. But for the most part it was a Biblical truth that had minimal impact on my everyday life. Until more recently.

Given all that is happening in our world, I find myself thinking *Lord, haste [speed] the day!* The promise of Him coming again to judge all that is wrong, to deal the final blow to Satan and his hordes, and to launch His emerging new world order—where there is no sorrow or death and where all things will be made new—is a compelling, wonderful thought. And not only is it a wonderful thought, but when fully embraced, it has life-changing ramifications for us today.

Writing to a church living in a dark and hostile culture, John the apostle focuses his readers' attention on the impact of Jesus' return when he writes, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). Simply, when we fully embrace the coming of Christ, we become hopeful people motivated to pursue pure lives!

The Biblical sense of hope is different than how we normally think of the concept. Typically, we might say, "I hope it doesn't rain on our vacation." But that hope is not for sure. It's merely wishful thinking. Biblical hope, on the other hand, is not a "hope so." It is grounded in the belief that what we are looking forward to is something that will really happen. Believing the Word of God is true and that Jesus' teachings are credible, His return is not a matter of "hope so" but a certain reality we look forward to.

The certainty of the Biblical hope of His future return has relevant impact on life in the present. We live in an increasingly dark culture where our dearest values and virtues are at best dismissed and at worst despised. Increasingly marginalized and often canceled as Christians, we fear that we have lost and that evil will advance.

Being certain of His return cancels our sense of hopelessness. It makes us hopeful people who are confident that in the end we are not losers at all. His return initiates His victory over Satan and proves the point that He, King Jesus, ultimately wins. And because He wins, we win too. His return gives us the certain hope that we are not part of an old-fashioned, out-of-date world order like many

in today's culture assume. Rather, we belong to an emerging victorious world order that is free of evil, sorrow, shame and guilt, and is blessed with a robust sense of righteousness, peace and joy where all things are new (Romans 14:17; Revelation 21:1-5).

This hope reminds us that life is like a feature-length film with God as its director. Freeze-framing the film in a dark moment always leads to hopelessness. But as followers of Jesus, we let the film roll, knowing that in the end He returns as the victor, as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16) and that we will, as John says, be forever locked into an eternal likeness of Him.

Given this great hope, it's no wonder that John wants us to be busy getting ready for the grand event! And getting ready is all about purifying our lives in anticipation of meeting the perfectly pure Jesus when He appears. Granted, we are all victims of the fall, and a perfect purity in every area of our lives is not yet possible.

Someday, at His return, we will be perfectly pure...but not now. However, followers of Jesus who believe that at any moment He will return, seek to ready themselves with a growing purity that is increasingly more like Him and less like our fallen selves. The pursuit of purity, as He is pure, is the pursuit of hopeful people who can't wait to see Him face to face!

I can't help but think of John 14:1-3, where Jesus speaks to a group of traumatized disciples who are about to be left in a hostile world without Him. He comforts them by saying that though He is going away to prepare a place for them, He will come again and receive them unto Himself. The imagery is reflective of Jewish marriage customs of the day. In that culture the groom-to-be would strike a marriage agreement with the father of the bride and then go back to his father's house to prepare an apartment for him and the bride to live in after they were married.

Meanwhile, the bride-to-be would wait in her father's house, preparing for the day that her lover would come to take her to the wedding—having no clue as to what day or what time that would be. When the groom finished preparing their home, he would start through the village with his friends, and as they walked, other villagers would join the entourage crying out, "The bridegroom comes! The bridegroom comes!" Hearing the shouts, no doubt the bride's heart would be racing, knowing that the moment she hoped for had finally come. And you can be sure that she had used the time in waiting getting herself ready for that very special day.

We, too, are waiting for a very special day!

# Signs of the Times

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## Something Big Is Coming Down

Shortly before Desert Storm, I spoke at a U.S. military base in Germany on the topic of “The Last Days.” I told the officers, enlisted personnel and their families, “We know something big is about to come down because of all the signs and indicating factors and the continued buildup of U.S. and Allied troops in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.” A few months later, in January of 1991, “something big” did happen—the U.S. and the Allies declared war and attacked Iraq. We also know that “something big” is about to happen prophetically because we see all of the “buildup” and “signs of the times” being fulfilled regarding the Lord’s return.

I believe you and I are living at the most exciting time in the history of the world. We are about to witness the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold thousands of years ago. There is a widespread awareness that some amazing things are happening on the world scene. Those who are believers in Christ know that prophecy is being fulfilled, and the Lord’s return is close at hand.

I realize that some of these signs have occasionally occurred throughout history and many people wrongly concluded they were the generation to see Christ return. We have had false prophets. We have had wars and rumors of wars. We have had earthquakes. We have had famines and pestilence. But, never before in history have we seen such an increase in both intensity and frequency of these and many other indicating factors. No other generation has witnessed the simultaneous coming together of so many prophetic events. Our generation, more than any other, has the potential to see the actual fulfillment of Revelation.

Although I became a believer in Jesus Christ in 1971 through a prophetic ministry, I wasn’t convinced back then that we were about to see Christ return any day soon. I believed that several things needed to occur in the world before we could see the fulfillment of what Scripture foretold. However, my attitude began to change and intensify in conviction as the years passed and the prophecies, or the potential fulfillment of them, began to line up. God’s Word and Spirit and my research convinced me that we are the generation (Matthew 24:34), and we must prepare for His return.

In 1971, there were few prophetic signs that had the potential of being fulfilled in the near future. However, today, there are virtually none that cannot be fulfilled in our lifetime.

## Revelation Beginning to Make Sense

For almost 2,000 years, there was no reasonable possibility for the literal fulfillment of Revelation—it all seemed like science fiction or mythology. As a result, many disregarded it, spiritualizing its meaning or said it was fulfilled back in AD 70. Revelation and other end-time prophecies made very little sense and seemed to be mere allegory or metaphor; it could not be literally fulfilled. However, in recent years, many things have happened on the world scene to make us realize that the prophecies in Revelation can be fulfilled in our lifetime.

## Prophetic Fulfillment Seemed Impossible

Forty years ago, only a few prophecies concerning the end times and the Tribulation period had the potential for fulfillment. Today, you would be hard pressed to find even one that does not have the potential to be literally fulfilled in our lifetime.

An old-time prophecy expert said that, in the early 1900s, they had to scratch around like a chicken to find one sign of the Lord's soon return. But, today, there are so many signs that someone would have to be either biblically illiterate or spiritually blind not to realize we are living in the end times.

When I became a Christian in 1971 and began studying prophecy, we were over here (holding out my outstretched left hand to the side). Scripture said we would move over here (holding out my outreached right hand to the other side). So, I began proclaiming what I saw in the Bible which seemed improbable at the time. However, I told audiences that, if my analysis was correct and we are in the “season” of the Lord's return, then these signs and indicators should be moving in the direction of my outstretched right hand—toward descriptions in Revelation—and that is exactly what is happening.

I remember speaking in 2008 on a military base to many who were involved in U.S. Intelligence and telling them that everything seems to be moving in the direction of Revelation; they agreed. I also asked them to show me anything that is not moving that way or does not have the potential to be fulfilled in our lifetime; they could not.

Almost every generation thought—or hoped—they were the generation but only one will be. We are the first generation with the potential to see *all* of Revelation literally fulfilled. We are living at a unique time. World developments, geopolitical events and technological inventions are making it possible for us to understand many end-time prophecies that seemed mere fantasy for almost 2,000 years.

## Signs of His First Coming Went Unheeded

The religious leaders during Jesus' first coming demanded a sign:

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them,

“When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:1-3).

The signs of the times Jesus was referring to were those concerning His first coming. Those Pharisees and Sadducees, who were experts in the Old Testament law and prophets, should have known that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah because of the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures He was fulfilling, but they did not discern the signs of their times.

What the Pharisees and Sadducees were guilty of then, many of us are guilty of today. We do not recognize the signs of the times being fulfilled all around us which indicate we are the “generation” and this is the “season” in which Jesus Christ will return.

During Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Luke gives the following account: “When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes’” (Luke 19:41-42). Because the Jewish leaders of Christ’s day did not recognize the time of His coming and, therefore, rejected Him as their Messiah, Jesus prophesied: “For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation” (Luke 19:43-44).

This prophecy was tragically fulfilled in AD 70 by the Romans under General Titus. How much more will the consequences be for those today who do not discern and prepare for His Second Coming? The judgment and devastation will be far worse than Israel’s national judgment in AD 70 for rejecting their Messiah—it will be worldwide and entail total devastation of this planet. How much more accountable will we be because there are so many scriptures about His Second Coming that will be literally fulfilled just as the ones about His first coming?

How can you tell that autumn is here? The leaves start to fall. How do you know that spring has arrived? The flowers begin to blossom. How can you identify the nearness of Christ’s coming? By the signs indicated in Scripture.

Although prophecies in the Bible are being fulfilled before our very eyes, the enemy has the masses brainwashed into believing that Scripture is outdated, full of error and irrelevant. The world perceives committed Christians as dogmatic and divisive troublemakers, and their ministers as charlatans. Therefore, considering the claims of Scripture, studying Bible prophecy or giving one’s life to Christ are not an option for some.

So, I caution you to keep your views concerning the last days in biblical balance. As excited as I am about all the prophecies lining up and being fulfilled,

we must not exaggerate or propagate unfounded beliefs lest we hinder the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## A World Gone Crazy

In his book, *How to Keep Your Head on Straight in a World Gone Crazy*, Rick Renner states:

You and I are living in strange times! We are actually living at the very end of the age—and as a result, we are going to see and experience things that no other generation has ever witnessed. Some things will be so far-fetched and bizarre that as rational, thinking people, we will find it incomprehensible. Indeed, to many of us, it already seems that common sense has been thrown to the wind on various fronts, replaced with irrational beliefs that are cheered on by a morally delinquent culture. But as those born to live in this hour, we must simply accept it as fact. You and I will be witnesses to strange developments as we near the end of this last-days time frame.

## Almost Upon Us!

In 2003, Karen and I were fleeing the California wildfires through a canyon. The flames were closing in around us, but, somehow, we escaped. Shortly thereafter, that canyon was consumed by the fires. In the same way, many prophecies concerning the end times are close upon us.

For over 50 years, I have attempted both to alert and prepare the Body of Christ for what is coming. End-time prophecies are lining up in this generation! Just a few more steps and we will be at Revelation 13, unable to buy or sell without a mark on the right hand or forehead. All that is needed is a global leader to rise up using available technology to enact total control and domination, “protecting” us from a global crisis—real or fabricated.

Multitudes of people are wandering aimlessly, caring only for today and disregarding what is coming upon this Earth. Most are oblivious or indifferent that Jesus Christ is coming back and seek to maintain some semblance of normalcy: “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” just as in Noah’s day (Matthew 24:37-39). Second Peter 3:3-4 informs us:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

The many “signs of the times” being fulfilled reveal just how close we are

to Christ's coming. This is not a day and age to be lukewarm but to remain faithful, know Scripture, have discernment and stand strong as witnesses for Jesus Christ and the truth of God's Word.

## Keep Alert

Luke 21:33-36 tells us to always watch and be on guard:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

God's Word provides warnings that the last days are not a time to: get drunk and abuse others (Matthew 24:48-51), hoard vast amounts of finances and resources (James 5:3), squander opportunities to be a witness for Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:14), mock the coming of our Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:3-4) or live in wanton pleasure (James 5:5; 2 Peter 3:11; 1 John 3:2-3). True believers in these end times must remain alert, watchful and faithful as we look forward to the Lord's coming.

# Four Abominations

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Humanity has always leaned toward arrogance, defiance, violence and immorality, but this generation is descending to new levels—unprecedented since the time of Noah’s Flood. Our culture is increasingly saturated with the very transgressions which God’s Word foretells will lead to its demise. Revelation 9:20-21 reveals that people during the Tribulation will refuse to repent—even after the devastating judgments of the seven seals and six trumpets:

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts (Revelation 9:20-21).

The deadly mixture of Satan’s seducing influences and humans’ sinful desires will lead to every imaginable perversion being tolerated, accepted, flaunted and celebrated. The book of Revelation indicates that people during the Tribulation will not repent of four abominations:

**1. Sorcery, Worshiping Demons and Idolatry**—New Age spirituality, Eastern mysticism, occultism, nature worship (venerating the creation rather than the Creator) and demonic phenomena will be prominent. Sorcery (*pharmakeia*) can refer to potions, amulets, charms, séances, witchcraft, incantations, magic spells and consulting mediums. The use of drugs, which in the ancient world were often used to dull the senses and induce an altered state of consciousness, will be conducive for mystical experiences. According to BibleRef.com:

The Greek word for “sorcery” is *pharmakeia*, from which we derive the word “pharmacy.” Most likely, the “sorcery” of end-times Babylon will include drug production and trafficking. Substances such as illicit drugs control and enslave people, making them easier to manipulate. The beast’s [Antichrist’s] city of Babylon will likely be a bastion of drug addicts and dealers. All versions of “sorcery” will be ended when God destroys Babylon.

Wicca, witchcraft, ritualistic magic, voodoo, paganism, idolatry, occultism, mysticism and demonic encounters are proliferating through the media and real-

life involvement. Mystery Babylon (Revelation 17:5) is going to be the world religion during the Tribulation period. Sorcery and idolatry will be so rampant during the Tribulation that Revelation 18:23 says, “all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.” No wonder, as the fifth trumpet judgment, God allows the release from the bottomless pit the most vile and wicked demons who will show their true nature by tormenting for five months their devoted adherents—those who do not have “the seal of God on their foreheads” (Revelation 9:4).

Revelation 9:1-11 is a vivid description of unrestrained demonic activity on the Earth in the last days. Those who are involved in sorcery, magic arts, idolatry, occultism and New Age spirituality would do well to consider the account of the demonic beings released from the abyss during the fifth trumpet judgment. The true intent of Satan and his demonic cohorts is to inflict harm, torture and destruction on human beings—even those in allegiance with them.

**2. Sexual Immorality**—People will be inflamed with unbridled lust and every sexual perversion imaginable. According to [neverthirsty.org](http://neverthirsty.org):

The Greek word *porneia* is a sin that includes a wide range of illicit sexual intercourse or sexual activity. The word can refer to prostitution, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, pedophilia, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, premarital sex and bestiality.

What many people have fought so hard to get—uninhibited sexual freedom—will finally be attained. Convinced they have achieved a great victory, they will rejoice and become even more brazen in refusing to give up their sins. Everywhere, youth look and listen, whether it is television, movies, cartoons, streaming platforms, books, magazines, music, video games and classrooms, they are being influenced (subtly and blatantly) to engage in sexual activity.

In my wildest rebellion before accepting Christ, it never even entered my mind (or that of my friends) some of the perversions today that have become normalized.

I see six phases of the “new” morality: tolerance, acceptance, endorsement, celebration, punishment and coming for your children. (For more information on this see my book *On Enemy Turf —Victory in Spiritual Warfare.*)

**3. Murders**—It will be an extremely violent world saturated with blood and grief—ethnic conflict, terrorism, hijackings, kidnappings, human trafficking, abortions, robberies, assaults, gang violence, bombings, assassinations, serial killers, mass murders, homicides and riots. Brutality and lawlessness have infiltrated virtually every facet of life—schools, workplaces, shopping centers, theaters, city streets, neighborhoods, homes, churches and everywhere people gather. Suicide, as well as addiction to, and death from, drug usage is impacting untold numbers of families with sadness and sorrow.

**4. Thefts and Lies**—Deception, fraud, corruption, scandals, slander and gossip will be widespread.

## No Boundaries

What do we see in America and the world today? Unbridled sexual immorality, intensifying violence, increasing thefts and lies, rampant mysticism, sorcery and occultism, and mounting demonic manifestations—just as foretold in Revelation.

Toddlers do not like boundaries or restraints. They want to be free to go where they want, when they want and do what they want. They do not fully realize the potential dangers they may encounter. In a similar manner, our society is removing all moral restraints and boundaries—leading to some dire consequences. The demise of countless lives, marriages and families is on the growing list of casualties.

Under the pretense of tolerance and freedom, today's generation is succumbing to every lust and perversion imaginable. Yet, in the midst of probably the most vile and corrupt generation in human history, God has His faithful remnant who will remain pure. Consider the 144,000 who will follow the Lord obediently during the Tribulation. They will not be defiled with women, for they are virgins. No lie will be found in their mouth; they will be blameless (Revelation 14:3-5).

# Amazing Prophecies

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Many prophecies in Scripture confirm divine inspiration and indicate how close we are to Christ's return. I have selected just a few to consider.

## Globalism

End-time scripture foretells the establishment of a world government (Revelation 13:7, 17:15-18; Daniel 7:23), a global economy (Revelation 13:16-17) and a universal religion (13:8-12, 17:1-2, 15). The Antichrist will form a 10-nation coalition enabling him to dictate control over a major portion of the world (Daniel 7:19-27; Revelation 13:3-8, 17:9-13). There is little doubt that we are rapidly heading toward a one-world government, a global economy and a unification of religion.

A leader will arrive on the world scene coming under the guise of peace and unity—supposedly presenting solutions for the world's dilemmas. The book of Revelation identifies this person as the Antichrist who will take the reins of the world through deception and intrigue, ultimately leading humankind in a unified rebellion against the God of the Bible. The Antichrist's cohort, the False Prophet, will be instrumental in uniting the world's religions into an ecumenical movement tuned to eventually worship the Antichrist.

## The Two Witnesses

What about God's Two Witnesses in Revelation 11? For centuries, people were baffled by these verses about the entire world looking at their dead bodies. Yet, the whole world is now capable of seeing their corpses displayed on the latest form of visual media. Revelation 11:7-12 provides the context:

When they [the Two Witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast [Antichrist] that comes up out of the abyss [bottomless pit] will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified [Jerusalem]. Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those

who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

The Two Witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days until they finish their testimony at which time the Antichrist is able to kill them. For three and a half days, their dead bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem as people from every tribe, nation and language will look at their corpses. It is momentous that, although these Two Witnesses are from God and empowered by Him, the world will be so undiscerning and unrepentant that they will despise and reject them. Many, many people—deep in rebellion against the God of the Bible—will rejoice over the deaths of the Two Witnesses and celebrate by exchanging gifts.

Amazingly, this prophecy of the entire world looking at their dead bodies can now be literally fulfilled through worldwide television, global satellite transmission and internet technology.

I have been in many villages around the world. Some of the places were so remote that the people stared at me because they had never seen a white person in real life, let alone someone with blue eyes. Yet, even in these secluded areas there was usually someone—whether it was in a hotel, business or someone’s house—who had a television or computer with people gathered around to watch events as they occurred around the world.

## Every Eye Will See Him

Echoing the words of Daniel 7:13 regarding the Messiah coming “with the clouds,” Revelation 1:7 promises that “every eye will see Him.” How could the Apostle John in the first century AD predict this universal viewing by his own inspiration?

## Flesh Will Rot

Zechariah 14:12 gives a horrific description of the plague that will strike all of the peoples who gather to go to war against Jerusalem:

Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.

Although this could refer to a supernatural judgment by God on the forces gathered against Israel in the end times at Armageddon, it is eerily similar to what would happen to those within the radius of the detonation of a thermonuclear bomb. The faces and skin of the invading armies melt like hot wax dripping down a candle. While prophecies such as Zechariah 14:12 were difficult to comprehend and seemed like science fiction not too many decades ago, modern weapons can now cause its very fulfillment. And, keep in mind that God's spoken word, by which He brought the universe into being, is far more powerful than any nuclear explosion.

## The Earth Will Be Burned Up

Second Peter 3:10-14 states:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.

These verses were once used by skeptics to disprove the Bible. How could there be a fire big enough to burn the whole world? People derided these verses before World War II, but, after the emergence of nuclear weapons, many began to see the potential for the fulfillment of these prophecies—even apart from God's supernatural intervention. The nuclear weapons of today are many times more powerful than the two bombs which decimated Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945.

Concerning 2 Peter 3:10, the Earth will be like metal in a hot fire—it will not be eradicated but all impurities and pollution removed and then remolded into a new Earth by the Creator.

## Prophecies Have Not Changed

Should one think these prophecies are just a modern translation of the Bible or have been reworded to reflect our times, I have an 1862 and an 1880s Bible (long before any reasonable explanation for the fulfillment of these verses came to light), and they say the same thing. Likewise, the prophecies and descriptions in even ancient Bibles are the same.

## The Lord Wants None to Perish

There is widespread awareness that some amazing, prophesied events are happening on the world scene. Those who believe in Jesus Christ know that the Lord's coming draws near. It would be wise for us to commit our lives to the God who inspired these prophecies.

The Lord has delayed His coming because:

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Today is the day to make certain your heart and life are right with the Lord. Do not delay—the prophetic clock is ticking and nearing the midnight hour. Always be prepared to meet your Lord by way of death or rapture. Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

# 9/11 and End-Time Prophecy—A Biblical Perspective of the September 11 Terrorism

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On the morning of September 11, 2001, the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history took place when four commercial airliners were hijacked by members of the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda. The first two planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane hit the western side of the Pentagon, just outside Washington, D.C. The fourth hijacked plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed down in a field in rural Pennsylvania, never reaching its intended target because its crew and passengers fought back against the terrorists.

Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives during the attacks—2,600 perished at the World Trade Center (not counting the terrorists), 125 at the Pentagon, 256 on the four planes, 343 firefighters and 71 law enforcement officers. That number would almost certainly have been significantly higher if not for the heroic actions of first responders and those aboard Flight 93.

The terrorists deliberately attacked two symbols of American strength: the Twin Towers in New York (symbolizing our wealth) and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. (representing our military power).

*The remainder of this chapter is from a message I gave at a local church five days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It has proven to be amazingly accurate.*

On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by terrorists. Nearly 3,000 people were killed as 19 al-Qaeda hijackers seized control of four jetliners. Two of the hijacked planes were flown into the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York City minutes apart. A third plane struck the Pentagon and the fourth was a foiled attempt which went down in a field in western Pennsylvania.

As the destruction and devastation of the diabolical plans of these terrorists unfolded (which before 9/11 many thought could only happen in other nations), no one knew what was going to happen next. There was great uncertainty of where they would strike next and what targets had been planned.

Shortly after the attacks that Tuesday morning, I told my staff, “You have witnessed another Pearl Harbor—only worse. This day will go down in infamy. America and the world will never be the same.”

We had numerous e-mails, calls and drop-ins from people thinking the end of the world had come. I assured them the end of the world had not come. There

is much prophetic scripture to be fulfilled, but everyone now began to see the potential for the fulfillment of Revelation.

A year before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, I spoke at an Arab center in California. An Egyptian man, who is a Christian and chief Arabic instructor for the U.S. military, shared with me his great concern over the growing threat of Islam in America. He was troubled by their desire to change our nation politically from the inside and the growing threat of terrorist attacks against America. His words have proven to be amazingly accurate.

While in Jerusalem, I asked some Palestinian Muslims what it would take to have peace with Israel: if Israel were to give back the Gaza Strip? How about the West Bank or Golan Heights? Will there then be peace? Since there were no television cameras or recording devices operating, they gave me an honest answer: "There will never be peace until we push Israel into the Mediterranean Sea."

## Close Encounters

*Before we continue with this 9/11 article, I want to share a few illustrations to give you a glimpse of the mindset and turmoil in the Middle East.*

In February 1987 while flying on a Jordanian airline, I looked at a map of the Middle East. Israel was conspicuously missing. During that trip, my family experienced the trauma of nearly being hijacked in an Arab country—all because we had Israeli stamps in our passports. Can you imagine the emotional distress of being in a foreign land where they do not speak your language, have a completely different culture and mindset and could care less whether you live or die? (Read my *Strength through Weakness* booklet for a more detailed account of this harrowing ordeal in 1987.)

While speaking to the U.S. military in October of 1990, shortly before many troops were deployed for Desert Storm, I also had an opportunity to speak in a large West German house-church. As well as American GIs and people from East Germany, Russia, Poland and Romania, there was a man from Egypt. Following my message, this Egyptian man told me his story. When he became a Christian, his Muslim family threw him off a train in an attempt to kill him, which resulted in the loss of his arm. This man, who had paid a tremendous price for giving his life to Christ, was requesting prayer that he may know and serve Jesus even more.

In February 1998, I returned to Jordan and the Middle East. A Muslim friend of mine from Jordan met me in Amman and gave me a personal tour. I was treated wonderfully by everyone we met—a stark contrast to the frightening episode in Jordan in 1987.

In Jerusalem, I spoke at Sar Shalom to Messianic believers from various countries and at Calvary Chapel of Jerusalem to predominantly Russian Jewish believers. In Jerusalem, they were passing out gas masks to Israeli citizens because of the threat of Iraq's retaliation against Israel with chemical warfare if the U.S. attacked Iraq.

Before I headed to Egypt, Karen sent the following e-mail from the U.S. to me in Jerusalem on February 15, 1998: “We have been hearing about pro-Iraqi and anti-American demonstrations in Egypt. Have you heard anything? They are going on in Jordan, too.”

Tourists were recently killed in Egypt and there was a threat of a U.S. strike against Iraq, so few Americans would go to Egypt at that time. Nevertheless, I was scheduled to speak at two youth rallies in Cairo and was not about to cancel.

Our five-hour caravan ride through the Egyptian desert and across the Suez Canal consisted of three buses (only nine people on our bus) and a military vehicle with four armed guards in front and one at the end, as well as an armed guard on each bus. During most of the trip to Cairo, the caravan traveled at 75 mph with the vehicles often only inches away, so no one could cut in on us. When we stopped for gas in the Sinai Peninsula, the buses and military vehicles formed a pyramid barrier around us with armed guards standing in position between the gaps for protection from potential terrorists.

In spite of the threat of a U.S. strike against Iraq, the people in Egypt, Israel and Jordan were friendly. In fact, most acknowledged appreciation for our coming to the Middle East in the midst of such dangerous tensions.

On December 25, 1998, three days before my son BJ and I left for Turkey, Osama bin Laden issued a decree stating that Muslims should attack every American in any way they could. He considered every American who pays taxes his enemy.

Then, while we were in Turkey on January 5, 1999, Saddam Hussein called for a Jihad (holy war) against every foreigner on Muslim and Arab soil. Both of these men (Osama and Saddam) are now gone, but their ideology remains.

Slim, a young man in Turkey, approached me and BJ at night (just as Nicodemus came to Jesus)—in fear of the Muslims as Nicodemus was of the Jews. His father was a retired ambassador for Turkey. He told us he would not be a Muslim if he was not forced to be one. He asked us if we had any evidence for our faith. He listened enthralled, but nervous, periodically looking to see if anyone was listening and possibly understanding the English we were speaking. After two hours of sharing evidence for the Bible and Jesus Christ and answering his many questions, I told him the Lord had a purpose for his life and could use him to impact his country like the Apostle Paul had done in this region almost 2,000 years earlier. I shared with Slim it would probably cost him his life, but the peace, joy and eternal life he would gain through Christ would make it worth the cost. From the U.S., we sent him books to help him grow in his relationship with Jesus Christ.

In January 2002, I was speaking at an international pastors’ conference in Jerusalem and to a Messianic congregation (“right down the road from where all the bombs go off” according to Rabbi Paul Bianchini). The first female suicide bomber blew herself up on the exact spot we were standing 23 hours earlier. One man was killed and 115 people were injured.

In July of 2002, my wife traveled with me as I ministered in the

Netherlands and England. In London, I spoke at the Iranian center before the World Soccer Cup. I was told not to mention Israel or that I was American. The response to my message on *Overcoming Giants* and *God's Boot Camp* was excellent from both Christians and Muslims. An elated Jordanian general visiting London came to the front and hugged me—an incredible healing from any lingering anger and nightmarish dreams I had from the near-hijacking in Jordan in 1987.

A young lawyer at the Iranian center told me he had been imprisoned and tortured in Iran because he mentioned that maybe God is a God of love. He was eventually released and received a visa to Japan. While in Japan, a little old missionary woman gave him a tract. As he read it, he realized the God of love he thought about while in Iran really did exist. He gave his life to Jesus and is now a powerful witness to the Muslims. He said that “if Iranians had a choice, most of them would become Christians.”

During one of several speaking engagements at the Christian Arab Center in California, the pastor introduced me to a man who had been Saddam Hussein's English interpreter during the first Iraqi war (Desert Storm). Because the U.S. was striking so effectively, Saddam thought he was a traitor and giving the U.S. military secrets. He assured me that never happened. He said they began to beat and torture him. When asked by the guards why he was smiling when they beat him, he replied, “I am a Christian and my Bible says, ‘Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.’” After being released from prison, he obtained a visa to Jordan and eventually came to America.

I shared these few illustrations to give you a glimpse of the mindset and turmoil in the Middle East. Now, let's continue with our topic of 9/11.

## Strength and Unity

I remember when I was in Haiti speaking and ministering in January 1991, I could only hear news by shortwave radio at the mission compound for thirty minutes in the evening. One night, I heard that the U.S. had attacked Iraq. My country was at war and I was in a foreign land. I and everyone with me wanted to get home to America to stand with our country. That was the collective attitude of our nation right after 9/11.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks, I told my staff and family that three things will come out of this. First, it will unite America and make her stronger (at least temporarily). Second, it will bring many to repentance. Third, it will accelerate us toward a new world order and a one-world government.

America was becoming soft as a nation. Like the Romans who were being entertained by all the violence in the Colosseum, we are being entertained by all the gratuitous violence and filth the media is spewing out. We became weak and undisciplined—sitting around watching television and eating our junk food—while nations like China discipline themselves to train mentally and physically. Many Christians had left their *First Love* and lost their closeness, hunger and

desire for the Lord and His Word.

In an effort to bring America to her knees, the terrorists only made us stand stronger. In an effort to weaken us, they made us far more powerful. They never dreamed their wicked scheme would unite our country and the world the way it did. But, over time, the unity in America has dissipated and our strength is visibly waning.

## Do Not Rejoice

Sure, Americans cheered their country to victory after 9/11, but we were not cheering for innocent civilians to be killed. My heart grieved for the Iraqi people. There is a different kind of hostility and revenge that we as Americans and believers in Jesus Christ should have than those who plot and cheer for the death and destruction of men, women and children.

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him. Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked; for there will be no future for the evil man; the lamp of the wicked will be put out (Proverbs 24:17-20).

Most of the people I have met from Turkey, Jordan, Palestinian Territory, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern and Islamic countries were gracious and kind. I have several Arabic friends who are believers in Jesus Christ, and I also have some Muslim friends. But, the extremists who are dictating this movement of terror and the masses cheering them on to maim and kill Americans and Israelis do not understand the implications and diabolical nature of what they are doing.

Obadiah warns about those who cheer and rejoice when tragedy comes:

“Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD, “destroy wise men from Edom.... Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem—you too were as one of them. Do not gloat over your brother’s day, the day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; yes, do not boast in the day of their distress. Do not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster. Do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress. For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you.

Your dealings will return on your own head" (Obadiah 8-15).

Even after they watched on television as our nation grieved—being in our midst and seeing our people cry, families broken and children devastated—they had no remorse. They tried to enter more planes with their knives and cutters to do who knows what but were apprehended and their plans thwarted.

Terrorists have infiltrated our country. They have strategies and plans that are incomprehensible. All across our nation, we need to pray for God's protection and intervention.

An e-mail we received from a friend in the Netherlands on Friday, September 14, 2001, is symbolic of what was happening across Europe. She wrote, "Today, everyone in Holland had a three-minute silence at noon. People pulled over to the side of highways, traffic stopped, work stopped, public transportation stopped, everything and everyone stopped for three minutes. They showed it on the news. From all parts of Holland and throughout Europe, there was a deadly silence that was really touching. Everywhere, the flags are halfway down, like our country is in massive mourning and church services are being held everywhere. Everyone here is sympathetic."

## Genuine Repentance?

On Tuesday night (September 11, 2001), virtually no one was watching filth on television, going to a strip club, reading pornography or attending the local atheist convention. People were in their homes and places of worship praying to God for help, comfort and protection, as well as seeking understanding for the events that had unfolded earlier that day.

People all across America were remorseful. I hoped that spirit of repentance would be long-lasting. For many, it was a genuine repentance, and their hearts were truly turned back to the Lord Jesus Christ. However, I knew that most people would return to their former lifestyles. Today, we see a nation and world given over to unrepentant behavior foretold in Revelation—sexual immorality, violence, sorcery, idolatry, thefts and lies.

I returned to New York City from ministering on the island of Trinidad (in the West Indies) exactly one week before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. When I had been speaking in Trinidad 12 years earlier (1989), I saw that the people in the villages were very plain, uninfluenced by the secular media. But, when I was there in September of 2001, it had changed drastically. I went to a large shopping mall and was amazed to see hundreds of young people with body piercings and tattoos—dressed like prostitutes and gang members. I asked my host, "Was this here before? Did I miss it?" I was told it only came in the last five years because now they have cable TV. America's movies and music completely changed a whole generation of youth in Trinidad.

As individuals and as a nation, America must truly repent and turn from the filth and corruption the media is spewing on us and our young people. We

need to stand strong as Americans and call our nation out of the immorality, atheism, occultism and paganism that has infiltrated it and back to its biblical foundation.

America is still the greatest nation in the world and I am glad to be an American. However, I am even more grateful for God's gift of salvation. My ultimate allegiance is to Jesus Christ and His Word. When America diverts from God's Word, Christians must stand for righteousness and truth.

## Forever Changed

In one day, America and our world, changed forever. It will never be the same. We will see increased surveillance, increased monitoring, increased control and increased police and military presence. When I have traveled in the Middle East, Africa and Europe, the military is highly visible with their machine guns in hand. We will begin to see that in America. Many of our freedoms have been taken away, but I pray that we still remain the most free and the greatest nation on this planet.

However, terrorism will eventually be stopped. Revelation indicates a time is coming when no one can wage war against the Beast (Antichrist). One day, a world government will be in such control that no one on this planet will be able to resist its power and might.

America has been a catalyst to unite Europe and the nations of the world. Nevertheless, it appears that in the not-too-distant future, a weakened America will be brought to her knees. Will terrorism, nuclear attack, invasion, moral corruption, economic collapse, internal chaos, natural disasters or something else devastate the U.S.? Only God knows! But, none of these would have ever been possible scenarios if we had not lost the blessing and protection of God because in every way possible He has been pushed out of and removed from this nation. So, we need to fervently pray for this nation and its leaders.

We need a genuine spirit of repentance across America and turning our hearts back to the Lord—before it is too late!

We have lost many freedoms in America since the September 11 terrorist attack. The day and age of privacy has come to an end. Being anonymous anymore is almost impossible. We have seen increased security at airports, sporting events, concerts, schools, malls, government buildings and public events. Surveillance cameras abound and there are even scanners that see through clothing.

While advanced technology for identification and surveillance appears to be a necessary fact of life in this increasingly violent and information-saturated world, soon virtually every person on this planet will be monitored—and eventually controlled. More sophisticated methods of identification and the compiling of background information on every single human being on this planet are being developed.

# The Coming Global Society

It is obvious that a scenario is unfolding to create a global system of political power, economic control, military might and religious unity. Just as Revelation predicted, we are rapidly moving toward a one-world government, a one-world monetary system and a one-world religion.

A leader will arrive on the world scene who will come under the guise of peace and unity—supposedly able to solve the world's dilemmas. The Antichrist will take the reins of the world through deception and intrigue to ultimately lead humankind in a unified rebellion against the God of the Bible.

The Antichrist's cohort, identified as the False Prophet, will be as the Bible indicates; a lamb on the surface, but a dragon underneath. He will be instrumental in uniting the world's religions into an ecumenical movement under a banner of pseudo love—falsely proclaiming everyone serves the same God. Already, there is a growing movement of globalism and religious unity—but a growing intolerance for biblical Christianity. The current hostility against the terrorists will one day be redirected against those who believe Jesus is the only way of salvation and who propagate supposed hate crimes from God's Word, the Bible.

The Antichrist and the False Prophet will attempt to attain what Satan's goal has been from the foundation of the Earth—to obtain control over and receive worship from every human being on this planet.

## Discernment Needed

The masses of the world will believe the Antichrist to be humanity's savior, uniting the world for the common good. However, those who know the Lord and His Word will discern his evil intent. If you do not know God's Word, you will have no reliable point of reference from which to evaluate end-time events. You will be utterly confused and not know who or what is really of God.

In today's changing and chaotic world, people turn to the Bible to make sense of confusing and difficult times. It is the people who know their God and His Word who have discernment, insight, understanding and the answers to life and eternity. They will be empowered by God's Spirit to boldly share their testimony of Jesus and accurately proclaim the truth of Scripture.

Revelation 18:7-10 states concerning Babylon the Great:

To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.' For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong. And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her

burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.

I am not saying that New York is “Babylon the Great.” But, what happened in New York is a microcosm and a glimpse of the macrocosm of what Revelation 18 says about Babylon when it’s finally destroyed at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period.

It is understandable that Luke 21:26 says: “people fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” But, Daniel didn’t panic when the decree went out that, if he continued praying to the God of the Bible, he would be thrown into a lion’s den. Daniel kept praying three times a day with his windows open towards Jerusalem. He did not panic because he knew his God.

The year prior to 9/11 (until the present), I have not had television in my home. I have sought the Lord with all my heart and, as end-time events continue to unfold, it has not caused me fear—grief for my nation and the world but not fear. God is bringing His people to their knees to pray and seek Him, then empowering us to stand in His courage and strength.

Daniel had been praying, fasting and seeking God for the end-time revelation. This is what was spoken to him: “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand” (Daniel 12:9-10).

## The Terrorists Know Three Things

Where are the 9/11 terrorists who hijacked those planes? They are not in paradise as they were led to believe. They know more about eternity than any of us here.

They know three things right now. First, they know the Bible is true and that every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is LORD. Second, they did not receive 70 virgins for acts of terror, but, instead, they are the ones now terrorized. Third, the terrorists know that at the end of the Millennium they will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God the Creator to receive their eternal sentence. Because their names are not written in the Book of Life, they will be cast into the lake of fire forever.

The moment a terrorist dies, he or she is in *terror* before the true and living God (Hebrews 10:30-31; Matthew 10:28).

## Where Would You Be and What Was Important to You on that Day?

Where would you be if you were on one of those hijacked planes or if you had been in the World Trade Center or the Pentagon? Where would you be right

now? Think about it. Nothing else matters more. We are talking about eternity.

In this life, you may have 70 years of having a good time, partying with your friends, watching filthy movies—living a self-centered, pleasure-oriented lifestyle. But, we are talking about eternity. Where would you be right now if that unexpected disaster took your life as it did to so many people who were thrown into eternity wondering how they got there—thinking they were going to work like any other day?

Everyone dies—some sooner than others. Many people die unexpectedly—with little or no time to prepare for eternity. That is why you want to live each day as if it were your last—one day, it will be.

Take a few moments to reflect and ask yourself, “Where would I be if I were one of those fatalities?” Then, ask yourself, “What was important to me on Tuesday, September 11, 2001?” Probably not all your materialism or lusts of the flesh. Reflect on what was important to you that fateful day—your faith and family. Now, begin to prioritize your time, resources and activities. Make each day you live centered around the Lord and His Word. What was important to you that Tuesday needs to be the priority for the rest of your life.

## Let's Pray

Lord Jesus, I ask that Your Spirit would move in a way that words could never accomplish. Challenge each person reading this to turn his or her heart toward You. Cause them to renew their first love—their desire, commitment and passion for You. Right now, cause each one to evaluate where they would be if they were dead. Seal in each person's mind—in a way that they can never erase from their memory—what was urgent in their life on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Make the focus for the rest of their lives to be on priorities with eternal significance. And, if anyone reading this book would not be with You for eternity, help them right now to sincerely say the following: “Lord Jesus, please forgive me. I believe You died and rose again. I give my life to You. Please write my name in the Book of Life. I confess You as my personal Lord and Savior. Please help me to live for You the rest of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

# The Foundation of America

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*This chapter on “The Foundation of America” was written by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.*

When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to play soccer in Europe with the East West Ambassadors. We were the only American team in the tournaments. I recall the night before the games were to begin—a ceremony took place where each team walked around the field as the fans in the stadium cheered. It was a thrilling experience to be waving our American flags and representing our country.

In all my travels, I am constantly made aware of the greatness of America and how God has blessed this nation. Yet, I see the greatness of America fading. While she is still the most influential nation in the world, her superpower status appears to be declining. I wonder what America will be like when my six children are older. Will the American dream be a faded memory of the past?

“What will be the future of America?” is a common question my father and I are asked when we speak on end-times prophecy. While there is no specific prophetic passage that mentions America, there is much biblical truth which sheds light on America’s future. In order to understand what is to come, we must consider America’s past and present.

God is sovereign over nations and kings: “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth” (Psalm 67:4). The truth that God governs the nations of the world is spoken of by Daniel after God revealed to him the details of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream:

Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings (Daniel 2:20-21).

Anyone who comes to power does so by the sovereign will of God. Regardless of whether the individual chooses to use his or her power for good or for evil, their authority derives from Almighty God. Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler over the Babylonian empire, came to recognize this divine truth the hard way. As he surveyed his empire, he made the following boast:

Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30).

Babylon certainly was a place of beauty and majesty under Nebuchadnezzar's reign. He constructed the hanging gardens, which were recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In addition, his capital city was surrounded with a double wall that was 10 miles in length highlighted by the elaborate Ishtar Gate. And further, he brought Babylon to world dominance as he expanded the empire, becoming the first Babylonian king to rule over Egypt. In the midst of boasting of these great accomplishments, the following occurs:

The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven saying: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you" (Daniel 4:31). The passage in Daniel goes on to tell us that Nebuchadnezzar was driven away from people, and lived like the animals of the field until he recognized that the Most High is ruler over the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:32-33).

A contemporary example of how pride and arrogance lead down a destructive path is Saddam Hussein, former ruler over the nation of Iraq, who desired to be the next Nebuchadnezzar. He planned to rebuild Babylon and gain prominence over the surrounding nations, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, he was humbled. The man who lived in opulence while his subjects lived in poverty was found hiding like an animal in a hole in the ground. However, contrary to Saddam, Nebuchadnezzar was restored to power. In his humility, he came to realize that honor and glory belongs to God alone (Daniel 4:34-35).

The truth that God is sovereign over nations and kings was commonly acknowledged early in American history. In reading letters and documents by the Founding Fathers, one quickly sees that this was an assumed truth. While not all of them were Christian, the following examples (a small sample), show that those who influenced America in its infancy were impacted by a biblical worldview. Numerous quotes by America's Founding Fathers not only acknowledge God's sovereignty over the establishment of America but over every nation in the world.

Patrick Henry, in his speech to the Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775, not only uttered the famous words, "give me liberty or give me death," but also said, "Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us."

George Washington, first president of the United States of America, uttered these words in the opening statement of his thanksgiving speech on October 3, 1789, "Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor."

In his address to the Constitutional Convention held at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on June 28, 1787, Benjamin Franklin made this

profound statement, “I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the Sacred Writings that ‘except the Lord build, they labor in vain that build it (Ps. 127:1).’ I firmly believe this....”

America’s past is saturated with men and women who realized that their nation’s existence and continual preservation was a direct result of the providential hand of Almighty God.

The first constitution of Pennsylvania (the commonwealth in which I was born and raised) was established in 1776. The following is an excerpt from this document which each member of the legislature had to declare before he took his seat in office: “I do believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration.” As this 1776 document reveals, the earliest form of government in Pennsylvania required its officials to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. It is amazing how far America has wandered from its foundational principles!

Just as God used the Persian king Cyrus (c. 580-529 BC) to bring the children of Israel back to their land after their long exile, He used the American president Harry Truman (1948) to fulfill His prophetic plan for the restoration of modern day Israel as a sovereign nation. One aspect of America’s role in prophecy has been her support of the nation of Israel. Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70 by the Roman general Titus, Israel as a nation ceased to exist. The Jewish people were scattered across the earth, while the land, which was given a new name called Palestine, became a barren land occupied by people of both Jewish and Arab descent.

Following World War II, Britain was given authority over Palestine. However, because of the ongoing problem between the Arabs and the Jews, Britain gave up its authority of Palestine to the United Nations. Driven by a desire to avoid a repeat of history, where the Jewish people were nearly exterminated by Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, and to help resolve the ongoing Arab/Jewish conflict, the United Nations proposed to partition the land into two states. Right away, this proposal faced opposition.

World leaders were forced to choose whether or not to support the proposal for an independent nation of Israel, and President Truman found himself in the middle of this battle. Many in the State Department and leaders in the military voiced their opposition to this proposal. They felt America’s support of an Israeli nation would create unnecessary tension with the oil rich Arab countries.

Despite facing opposition within his own cabinet, President Truman held to the belief that Israel had a prophetic destiny. This belief came about through his reading of the Bible (it is reported he had read through the Bible twice by age 12) and conversations with a Jewish friend by the name of Edward Jacobson. These two factors proved to influence the decision that Truman made on May 14,

1948. For it was on this day that Israel made a declaration of statehood. Shortly thereafter, President Truman declared America's recognition of the nation of Israel.

A story is told of Truman being introduced by his Jewish friend Jacobson to a group of professors in the following way, "This is the man who helped create the state of Israel." The story goes that Truman responded by saying, "What do you mean create? I am Cyrus. I am Cyrus."

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God promised that Israel would come back to its land after being scattered among the nations:

Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land" (Ezekiel 37:21).

America has also been used to fulfill prophecy through her role in obeying the Great Commission. No other nation in history has done more to promote worldwide missions than America, striving to accomplish Jesus' prophetic words (Matthew 24:14).

In Genesis 12, God calls Abram (whose name is changed to Abraham in chapter 17) to leave his country and relatives for a land that God will show him. God then gives the following promise:

And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3).

Here, we see that God not only makes a prophetic promise to Abram but to all other people depending on how they deal with him. Of course, we know that the "great nation" God promises to Abram is the Jewish people.

We can see the second part of this prophecy fulfilled in America. No modern nation has supported Israel and been a better friend to the Jewish people than America. This fulfillment of the prophetic statement God made to Abram is a major reason why America has been such a blessed nation. Consider the status of America since 1948 when President Truman set the precedent of supporting Israel as a nation. America was blessed economically and militarily and was the envy of the other nations.

Moving to the present situation in America, I am sure it is not hard to see how far we have strayed from our past. Just as the nation of Israel walked away from God, the same pattern is being repeated in America.

God commanded Israel to pass on a spiritual legacy to the next generation. They were called to show the next generation how faith is related to every area of life (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). For a time, the nation of Israel took seriously this mandate from God (as recorded in Judges 2:7). However, just three verses later,

we find a drastic change:

All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and another generation rose up after them who did not know the LORD, nor even the work which He had done for Israel (Judges 2:10).

The result of just one generation not fulfilling God's mandate to teach the next generation about the Lord led Israel on a destructive path:

Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger (Judges 2:11-12).

No longer did the next generation follow the commands of the Lord. Instead, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Tragically, this same path is being taken by America. Our spiritual past and the way in which God has blessed our nation is forgotten. We no longer seek the wisdom of God and His Word. Instead, like the children of Israel, everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes. We are forfeiting the blessings and freedoms for which America's founders gave their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.

As we contemplate the present reality in America the obvious questions arise, "Is there any hope for our future? Can we once again experience the blessings of God?" While many answers are proposed—changing laws, legislating conservative values, changing the political makeup in Washington, D.C.—none of these solutions will ultimately succeed. There is one thing America must do to ensure its future. As Solomon reminded the children of Israel of what they should do if they walked away from the Lord, so, too, America needs to heed these words if she expects to see God bless this nation once again. God's words to Solomon are pertinent for us today:

If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

# How Long Can America Stand?

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America has been the greatest nation in the history of the world. Built upon the principles in God's Word, she has seemed invincible. Once honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, she now forsakes and rejects the ways of the One who has blessed and protected her. America is hardening her heart and distancing herself from the God of the Bible and enthusiastically embracing beliefs and practices contrary to His nature while rejecting virtually every aspect of biblical morality. Look where it has gotten us: a scourge of alcohol abuse, drug overdose, suicide, sorcery, violence, sex trafficking, family breakdown and many other harmful repercussions.

Scripture is clear about what happens when a nation turns from the God who so blessed them. Accordingly, the testimony of Scripture, the lessons of history, the remedial judgments and the witness of God's Spirit announce America's inevitable fate—unless she repents.

Dr. David R. Reagan stated in an article entitled, "The Example of the United States" in the May-June 2020 edition of *Lamplighter* magazine:

We were founded as a Christian nation, committed to Christian values, and God greatly blessed us. But in the 1960s, we began to thumb our nose at God as a cultural revolution was launched. Our society quickly descended into a cesspool of sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, abortion on demand, legalized gambling, rampant blasphemy and a flood of pornography. Our national slogan became, "If it feels good, do it!" We adopted a hedonistic lifestyle, calling evil good and good evil.

Why have we trampled underfoot the very Word of God? Are we deaf to God's calls to repent? Are we too stiff-necked to turn back to the LORD and walk His path before it is too late? Have we become so hard-hearted that the trends of secular society are guiding the Church rather than God's Word and His Spirit? Does this generation not realize that the apocalyptic events described in Revelation are on the verge of occurring? As cataclysmic judgments loom at our door, how can we continue this foolhardy course? Are we too blind to see that many of these prophesied curses are already being experienced in America for violating God's laws?

Any discerning person can recognize what is happening: America is being methodically attacked, and the glory of our beloved country is rapidly

diminishing. Under the pretense of protection, U.S. and global citizens are being methodically monitored, strategically controlled and systematically enslaved. Increasing surveillance and loss of privacy are speeding us toward the reality of Revelation 13:17—not being able to buy or sell without a mark on the right hand or forehead.

We are facing impending judgment, yet so many have stopped-up ears, blinded eyes and calloused hearts. We are desensitized by our twisted values and are lacking discernment to recognize what is coming. Although initially written millennia ago for the nation of Israel, Moses' words are applicable to America today. God promised blessings for obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Leviticus 26:3-13), restoration for repentance in violating His Word (Leviticus 26:40-45; Isaiah 1:18-19) and harsh consequences for rebellion, disobedience and the persistent violation of His decrees (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Leviticus 26:14-39; and Isaiah 1:20-31).

One day, America, like Judah, may be invaded, our people humbled and taken captive. One day, those who are selling out America and betraying her by actively or passively undermining her biblical values will sit in mourning over the loss of our great cities—as the Jews grieved for Jerusalem when they were taken into Babylonian captivity. I have grave concerns for this nation I love so much. Every Fourth of July for the past several years, I have pondered the gradual—sometimes dramatic—changes in America. I see the flag at our ministry center swaying in the breeze and wonder how long it will fly. Will terrorism, nuclear attack, invasion, moral corruption, economic collapse, natural disasters or something else cripple the U.S.?

America is not specifically mentioned in Bible prophecy because she will either suddenly or gradually cease to be a world power. At this time, America is playing a significant role in end-time prophecy as she helps lay the foundation for much of what Revelation foretells.

Some believe that the rapture mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 4:16-18 will take so many Christians in politics and the military that it will weaken America's leadership. A weakened America could easily be absorbed into the Revived Roman Empire and become part of the Antichrist's future regime.

Some believe America is the Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17 and 18. If this is true, America will be a leader in the oppression of biblical Christianity and the persecution of true believers. Her apostasy and prosperity would continue until she is completely destroyed near the end of the Tribulation period by the Antichrist and the world leaders who support him.

There are several possible scenarios for America's gradual decline (or quick demise) neutralizing her as a superpower. Out of that vacuum could arise the global leader who, with brilliant proposals of peace and prosperity, will rally the world to unite on an unprecedented scale.

## Potential Threats

Many potential threats are creating the “perfect storm” that could

devastate America and turn the American dream into an American nightmare. The following are a few possibilities:

Moral corruption and decay is destroying the soul of America—resulting in divorce, single parent families, family turmoil, child abuse, pornography, incest, molestation, rape, sex trafficking, abortions, political and corporate corruption, theft, lies, drug addiction (both illegal and prescription) and alcohol abuse. These are all taking a heavy toll on America.

Sexually transmitted diseases are reaching epidemic proportions and affecting many lives and relationships.

Water, land and air pollution has turned many of our nation's waterways into a "toxic soup" today. (My friends and I used to swim in the Shenango River and fill our canteens with water from local streams and creeks to drink.)

Diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and other maladies are devastating one or more members of nearly every family in America.

Internal chaos could wreak havoc on the America many of us once knew. Violent crime, gang violence, mass shootings (in public buildings, military bases, schools and other places), rioting and anarchy are permeating our country to the point that no area is immune.

Acts of terrorism across America, including attacks against major utilities (water, gas, electric...) could cripple American cities.

Persecution of Christians (while tolerance for all others) is increasing as anyone with conservative religious or conservative political persuasion is considered deplorable.

Electromagnetic pulse (EMP) with resulting loss of all electronic equipment would throw America back to the 1800s.

Cyberattacks by hackers have broken into computer systems and breached our security, stealing military secrets as well as identity information on millions of federal workers, military personnel and U.S. citizens. The data breach could potentially affect every federal agency. This information could be used to impersonate or blackmail federal employees with access to sensitive information.

China is a major concern and is preparing for an inevitable war with America which they intend to win because China wants to be the next superpower. While many Americans are becoming undisciplined and weak, the Chinese are training and strengthening. With guns being increasingly confiscated, China's massive military could sweep across America and decimate her.

Russia could unleash devastation on America with a preemptive strike using nuclear submarines off of our shores. Russia and a coalition of Arab nations, in fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39, could then invade Israel without the U.S. hindering or thwarting their attack.

Iran is nearing nuclear capability and has repeatedly announced its intention to nuke Israel and America.

North Korea continues to be a real threat with their nuclear weapons.

The border with Mexico is extremely vulnerable. Drug cartels are reported to be running operations in many American cities.

Extreme weather and natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornados, floods,

polluted streams and rivers, droughts, heat waves, hail, wildfires, volcanic eruptions and/or earthquakes could wreak havoc across America and bankrupt insurance companies.

Financial burdens and distress could cascade into economic chaos and collapse from escalating national debt, skyrocketing health care, soaring living expenses and increasing taxes. Insurance premiums would rise. Grocery expenses would inflate from the scarcity of food.

The coronavirus pandemic decimated the lives and futures of countless Americans and those around the world. Other bacterial or viral infections could reach pandemic proportions and could ravage America's (and the world's) economy and be a stepping stone for an emerging world order.

## America's Military Might

We are the most formidable fighting force in the world, but the state of the economy could be our undoing. You cannot fund a strong military with a weak economy. It could result in our having to reduce our military and bring our troops home leaving the world a much more dangerous place.

Just as a strong boxer, taking blow after blow, falls unconscious to the canvas, America is close to being "knocked out" from the relentless assaults. Muhammad Ali used his famous "rope-a-dope" to tire opponents in the boxing ring, and America is punching herself out morally, financially and militarily. The chipping away of the foundation of America leaves us vulnerable to widespread confusion and chaos. America faces many possible crises that could take her down slow and steady or hard and fast.

None of the deadly scenarios referred to above would have been possible had we not turned from the Lord, forfeiting His protection and blessing. Turning from faith and righteousness to disbelief and wickedness makes us ripe for judgment. Can we not see our imminent peril and looming catastrophe? Do we not perceive that the consequences recorded in the Bible are repeated throughout history with the same tragic results for Israel, Judah and other nations that defied the LORD? These consequences are playing out now in this nation before our eyes.

Will terrorism, nuclear attack, invasion, moral corruption, economic collapse, internal chaos and natural disasters cripple or devastate the U.S.? Or will America repent and turn back to the Lord? God only knows. But, the wound is becoming increasingly incurable.

# Is Judgment Coming to America?

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God will bring America to her knees—either in repentance or judgment. If we are to stand as a nation, we must be on our knees as individuals.

Back in the 1980s, after much prayer, fasting and biblical research, I warned about what I saw coming: America's decline, apostasy, persecution of Christians in the U.S., and the move toward a one-world government and monetary system with a unified world religious network. What seemed impossible and far removed then is now at our doorstep.

The greatest peril facing America today is that she has forsaken the LORD. God has been pushed out of our schools, government and many other facets of our culture. In 1962, prayer was removed from public schools, and, in 1963, the Bible was taken out. The Ten Commandments, nativity scenes, Christmas carols, crosses and prayer in Jesus' name have been systematically banned while Eastern, occult, atheistic and New Age beliefs and practices are welcomed.

A man I had met in Haiti, who was visiting the U.S. for the first time several years ago, said something simple, yet profound: "Americans have everything, but they need God." The move to remove God from every vestige of public life is hastening our downfall. America is no longer the same America of our youth.

When our fathers and grandfathers fought to liberate Europe from brutal Nazism, who would ever have believed what America herself would become? It is unsurprising that so many older Americans have grave concern for this country and see only devastation ahead.

To destroy biblical Christianity by blaming, opposing and neutralizing it is to destroy America! This appears to be the demonically inspired agenda of a growing number of individuals and groups both nationally and globally.

America, as well as many other nations, has abandoned God's designed institution of marriage and the family. Nearly everything the Bible teaches is being rejected while almost anything that is contrary to God's nature and Scripture is being embraced. There is no remorse as idolatrous and immoral practices are becoming the norm—first merely tolerated, then accepted and now enthusiastically celebrated. Today's generation flaunts every imaginable disgraceful behavior right in God's face.

Compounding our defiance of God's Word, American (and world) leaders are pressuring Israel to divide the land despite biblical warnings otherwise:

I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of

Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land (Joel 3:2).

## Persecution Is Coming to America

The shadow of persecution is spreading across America and will become an increasing reality. Professing Christians who do not want to face harassment, persecution, lawsuits and incarceration will distance themselves from the Jesus of the Bible and deny biblical truth. Forsaking the Lord and separating themselves from genuine brothers and sisters in Christ, they will become part of the prophesied apostasy.

On the other hand (ironically), a wave of unknown persecution in America will wake up many sleeping Christians to become totally committed to Jesus Christ because they know the time of His coming is close at hand. Instead of craving the fleeting pleasures of this world, their desire will be to honor the Lord. They will willingly sacrifice anything in this life to gain the eternal inheritance Jesus promises to all who love Him and obey His Word.

## Is the Wound Beyond Healing?

There came a point when Judah's idolatry, sorcery, immorality, violence and arrogance became so prevalent that God commanded Jeremiah not even to pray for her (Jeremiah 7:16-17). He emphatically said to Jeremiah:

Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go! (Jeremiah 15:1).

Again, God tells the prophet Ezekiel:

"Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it and cut off from it both man and beast, even though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves," declares the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 14:13-14).

God's judgment eventually falls as we have discovered concerning the fate of unfaithful Judah who followed the abominations of the nations and defiled the house of the Lord. Although God compassionately sent emissaries, the people "continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at

His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:16).

## Is the Handwriting on the Wall?

Belshazzar, king of Babylon (539 BC), held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles. At what would be his last banquet, Belshazzar “gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a man’s hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king’s face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together” (Daniel 5:2, 4-6).

When the king’s conjurers, master astrologers and diviners could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation, King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed and his face grew even paler (Daniel 5:7-9). Only Daniel was able to read the inscription and make known the interpretation. He said to the king:

O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him (Daniel 5:18, 20).

Daniel continued:

Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. Now this is the inscription that was written out: “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.” This is the interpretation of the message: “MENE”—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. “TEKEL”—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. “PERES”—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5:22-28).

That same night, Belshazzar was slain in a surprise attack, and Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Army.

Like ancient Israel during her times of apostasy, our nation distances itself from the God of the Bible and defies His commandments. Just as Israel and Judah repeatedly refused to repent but flaunted their idolatry, sorcery and immorality in God's face, so, too, does the U.S. And, just as God's hand of protection was removed from Israel, later Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity (722 BC) and then Judah into Babylonian captivity (586 BC), our judgment looms on the near horizon. Like Belshazzar when he saw God's handwriting on the wall, faces will grow pale and knees will shake. Just as conjurers or diviners could not charm Belshazzar's dilemma away, no one and nothing will be able to deliver our nation from God's coming judgments.

Prophecy is being fulfilled: the monumental peace treaty foretold in Scripture is close to being signed, a totalitarian world government coinciding with the treacherous reign of Antichrist and the False Prophet draw ever closer, apostasy accelerates and persecution of true believers in Christ and hostility toward the Bible increases—yet few seem to notice or care. The approaching tribulation judgment of God's wrath and Christ's Second Coming are ignored by those who do not recognize the “signs of the times.” Anyone who cannot see “the handwriting on the wall” must be spiritually blind! If the United States continues its errant path and foolish ways, her demise is inevitable.

Belshazzar was drinking and partying, oblivious to—and unprepared for—the attack that was about to happen. Likewise, the U.S. is unprepared for what lies ahead and could be “slain.” Daniel, however, was not caught off guard. You, too, can be aware of prophesied events that are upon us in these end times if you read the Word of God and spend time in prayer. You can have the same discernment as Daniel.

## Past Judgments

Every person in the U.S. makes decisions (knowingly or unknowingly) that reveal whether their loyalty is to Christ and His Word or to a world system in rebellion against Him. It is because of God's love and mercy that He allows difficulties, suffering and persecution to purge and purify believers in preparation for the impending rapture of the church.

Cataclysmic judgments have occurred several times in the past. As well as God's judgment of Adam and Eve's disobedience with its effect on all humanity (Genesis 2:17; 3:14-24) or the confusion of the language and scattering of the nations abroad at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4-9), consider Noah's Flood:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, “I will blot

out man whom I have created from the face of the land” (Genesis 6:5-7).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is another biblical example of God’s judgment. Three men appeared to Abraham—two were angels and the third was a theophany (appearance of God in human form). Genesis 18 gives the following account:

And the LORD said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.” Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account” (Genesis 18:20, 23-26).

Through Abraham’s intercession, the Lord agreed to spare the cities if just ten righteous people were found within Sodom. They were not, and Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed.

It is erroneous to believe that God will not judge America if there are more than ten righteous people. God may not annihilate America as He did Sodom and Gomorrah, but Israel and Judah faced severe judgments even though such righteous people as Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah were there. Israel went into Assyrian captivity in 722 BC, and, in 586 BC, Judah went into Babylonian captivity. God has also judged many other nations throughout history.

The Apostle Peter confirms God’s past and future judgments:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment (2 Peter

Jeremiah prophesied God's impending judgment to an apostate and unrepentant Judah for 40 years before it actually happened. All that time, a loving God sought to turn their hearts back to Himself. Persistent in rebellion and apostasy, Judah's judgment finally came. Today, many do not believe God's judgment is coming to America, but it is and even more severe than what we have already faced.

## We Must Change Our Course

As a new Christian in the early 1970s, I read accounts in the Old Testament about the immoral and idolatrous acts of the Israelites and the resulting judgments. I thought to myself, "How could God's people be so foolish as to participate in such wicked and rebellious behavior and do so repeatedly?" Yet, today, such behavior is the accepted norm in far too many churches.

As the world increases in defiant rebellion and refuses to repent of its obsessive appetite for sexual immorality, many in the church not only accept but endorse, celebrate and even participate in these practices as the Israelites did with the idolatrous Moabites (Numbers 25:1-3). And, even as King Uzziah went too far when he presumed to burn incense in the Temple and the Lord's judgment fell upon him (2 Chronicles 26:16-21), many are going too far in what they are doing in the church today. The prophet Ezekiel said, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing here, so that I would be far from My sanctuary?" (Ezekiel 8:6).

Israel's apostasy caused God to distance Himself and no longer hear their prayers. The Israelites turned to spirits and mediums for guidance and listened to false prophets who led them astray to their eventual destruction. I think the Lord is likewise appalled by what is going on in many churches today! Some beliefs and practices are so appalling that I cannot even put them in print. Are we, by our detestable practices, driving the Lord from our churches and our land? Have we so lost the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of God's Word that we must resort to entertainment to draw a crowd? The nineteenth century pastor Charles Spurgeon said, "The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them."

Truth has stumbled in the street as our culture drifts further and further from God's Word. It seems obvious that, as one biblical principle after another is cast to the wind and one virtue upon another is trampled to the ground, there is a parallel loss of God's blessing and protection as calamity after calamity confronts our nation, and one freedom after another is taken from us. Many people have so little spiritual discernment that they will not understand until all is lost!

To reverse the chaotic state of our country, we must cry out to the Lord, truly repent and turn from the wickedness that is enveloping our society and

infiltrating the church. If the body of Christ does not *sincerely* repent and purify herself, be assured that even greater judgment will come to America and persecution to the church. We must change our course before intensifying darkness on the near horizon completely overwhelms us. Some may not believe God's prophesied judgments are coming to this generation, but, unless we truly repent, they will!

## Has America Gone Too Far?

Our nation lives on borrowed money for our national debt and on borrowed time from a merciful God. If America continues on her reckless path, waves of judgment will intensify intending to bring those who will to repentance and to cleanse the Earth of those whose persistent rebellion, arrogance and wickedness have desecrated it.

September 11, 2001 was a wake-up call to America that exposed our vulnerability. Other crises and natural disasters since that time should alert us that God's hand of blessing and protection is being removed and that even greater calamities await us. Instead of true and lasting national repentance after 9/11, time has proven that even many in the Church have become spiritual prostitutes by tolerating, endorsing and participating in beliefs and practices that are detestable to our Creator.

Many individuals and groups pray for upcoming elections and sing "God Bless America," but is it merely a cry to God to bless our nation and give us what we want? Or will these prayers result in turning from the wickedness that is enveloping our society and has infiltrated the Church?

Even a national day of prayer is insufficient without true repentance that results in a change of heart and behavior. We must not merely deal with the symptoms of our dire dilemma but address the real, underlying cause. America is having a moral heart attack, and the only remedy is spiritual and moral regeneration. We must have true and lasting national repentance to avert disaster.

Unless we as individuals and as a nation fall on our faces before God in true repentance, a weakened America will be brought to her knees. Our day of judgment will be severe because "from everyone who has been given much, much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

The prophet Jeremiah states:

If that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it (Jeremiah 18:8).

God appeared to Solomon and promised him concerning Israel (which is relevant for other nations who seek the Lord) that if they "humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear

from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14). In His mercy, God may grant us more time, but we must change our course before intensifying darkness on the near horizon overtakes us. While my heart hopes America will repent, my gut tells me she will not. If the Body of Christ does not purify herself, God will allow persecution to do so. If the Church does not truly repent and clean up her act, cataclysmic judgments will come to America.

## What Must We Do?

We must humble ourselves and cry out to the Lord for grace and mercy. We must modify our beliefs, words and behavior to honor Him and His Word. We must seek to reach as many people with the Gospel as possible. We should prepare our loved ones and friends for what is coming according to Scripture. We should warn those who do not know the Lord to never take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:13-18, 14:9-11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4).

We must fervently pray for this nation and its leaders. We should be exemplary citizens. While I am thankful to be an American, my highest allegiance is to Jesus Christ and His Word. When America abandons God’s Word, I must stand for truth and righteousness.

Jeremiah was considered a traitor for proclaiming God’s coming judgment on his country unless they repented. He was not a traitor; he was faithful to both God and country. The real traitors were the ones who led the people into the wickedness and apostasy that resulted in the removal of God’s protection and blessing. Our commitment to God and Scripture should make us outstanding citizens because we have America’s best interests at heart.

## An Ancient Prayer for America

Daniel’s powerful prayer of repentance for the people of Israel while in Babylonian captivity 2,500 years ago should be prayed today by Americans for America. Make time to read Daniel 9:1-19 in its entirety, but here are some excerpts:

Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame.

As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. Therefore the

LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

If the people of America pray such a prayer as this—truly repenting and returning to the Lord with all our hearts—the Lord may bless and protect once again. If not, Jeremiah’s prophetic words to Judah will befall America: “The wound is beyond healing” and will prove to be fatal.

## A “Prophetic” Dream for America?

In November 2000, I had a dream that greatly perplexed me. This four-part dream occurred four separate nights.

In the first part of the dream, I saw multitudes of people dancing in the streets and celebrating euphorically in victory. I could not understand their exuberance but knew it was indicating a growing influence in America of defiance toward God and His Word.

In the second part, I saw Christians. Some were supposedly “lukewarm” Christians sitting in front of a television—caught in worldliness and immorality. Then, there were those who were committed to Jesus Christ being persecuted. Some were martyred. A committed Christian was taken and burned at the stake. I was troubled in my spirit by these disturbing images.

The third part of the dream was a missile flying overhead toward Washington DC. It seemed to be moving in slow motion. Everyone started weeping because they knew it was the demise of the U.S. I said to everyone, “You should have repented before and this would not be happening.”

The fourth part of the dream was a massive “army” marching across America—side by side, wave after wave, leaving devastation behind them. I could not clearly distinguish the facial features of this “army,” but they were indeed fearsome and terrifying.

The dream bewildered me until several years later when the first part of it was replicated in the media as multitudes of people celebrated and cheered when the Supreme Court declared same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states. Biblical truth and God’s design for marriage were thrown to the ground.

Was this a prophetic dream? Will the second, third and fourth parts of this dream become a reality as did the first part? Time will tell. A notebook I keep, entitled “The Impossible,” documents the dozens of times the Lord has spoken to my heart this strongly—and all of them have ultimately been fulfilled.

## Is the Glory Departing?

I wrote the following poem several years ago:

### **America—The Glory Is Departing**

America, America you were so very blessed.  
You loved the Lord, and His truth you once professed.  
You honored His Word and blessed His name,  
But now you put them both to shame.  
Respected by allies and feared by foes,  
A once-free country, you now face many woes.  
Of all the nations, God made you the best,  
But now your name is oft’ said in jest.  
So far removed from all once possessed,  
Your people in every city, deeply distressed.  
America! Turn to the Lord before it’s too late.  
And pray you’ve not already sealed your fate!  
Hear the Lord’s pleas,  
And fall on your knees.  
That He may restore,  
And bless you once more from shore to shore!

## Defining Moment / Pivotal Point

Like that fateful day on 9/11 for those in the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon or on Flight 93, America and each one of us is at a pivotal point in history—a defining moment when we must make a decision and then do something about it. We risk losing virtually everything with the direction our nation is going.

No matter what course our nation follows, we as individuals must humble ourselves before the Lord and cry out to Him for grace and mercy. We must modify our beliefs, words and behavior to honor Him and His Word. We must get on our knees to pray, seek Him and then be empowered to stand in His courage and strength to be a witness for Him.

# Hezekiah Speaks

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Hezekiah was a righteous king who called the people of Judah back to the Lord and out of the idolatry and immorality they had fallen into under the reign of his father King Ahaz. Hezekiah sent word to all Israel (those from the ten northern tribes who had not been taken into Assyrian captivity) and to Judah (not yet taken into Babylonian captivity) through his couriers (runners) inviting them to come to the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and to return to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (2 Chronicles 30:1-9).

Second Chronicles 30:10-12 tells us that some of the Israelites laughed at the couriers and mocked them (similar to our generation of media, lawmakers and society, increasingly hostile toward biblical Christianity). Nevertheless, others humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. God always has His faithful remnant.

Are you among those who heed God's Word or with those who scorn and ridicule it? Those of us who turn our hearts to the Lord will eventually experience great joy as experienced in King Hezekiah's day (2 Chronicles 30:25-26). However, those who refuse to repent may end up like Zedekiah, the twentieth and final king of Judah (just a few generations after Hezekiah):

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God...he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem. The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36:11-16).

After many years of patience and sending remedial judgments, God's final response to Judah's rebellious and unrepentant behavior was to allow Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple in 587/ 586 BC, with a large number of the people of Judah taken into captivity. Zedekiah's sons were

slaughtered in front of him, and he was blinded and taken in chains to Babylon where he was imprisoned until his death.

Jeremiah the prophet had repeatedly warned of impending judgment if the leaders and people of Judah continued to disobey God. Could a similar fate befall the United States?

## The Old Adage ...

A growing number of media personalities, political leaders and celebrities today blatantly mock and defy the God of the Bible in word and lifestyle. They disregard and disrespect God just like the apostate Israelites of biblical times.

Is God removing His hand of protection, allowing the gradual demise of the U.S. today? Is this His final warning to turn our hearts back to Him before it is too late? Without widespread repentance, similar individual, regional and national judgments that repeatedly befell the people and nation of Judah are surely coming upon this generation for their unfaithfulness to the One who had so blessed this country. The old adage will once again prove true: Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it!

## Regret or Rejoice

King Hezekiah invited everyone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Many people (“a very large assembly,” 2 Chronicles 30:13), accepted his invitation to return to the Lord and come to the Temple where “there was great joy in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 30:26). Likewise, Jesus invites everyone who is spiritually thirsty to “take the water of life without cost” (Revelation 22:17). Will you ridicule and reject Jesus’ invitation, only to later regret the eternal consequences? Or will you accept Jesus’ end-time invitation of salvation?

At His Second Coming, believers will jubilantly enter the Millennium (Revelation 20:4-6). Following Christ’s thousand year reign on Earth, we will be welcomed into the celestial city of God, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21 and 22), to enjoy His bountiful blessings for all eternity!

# The Rapture—Where Have All the Christians Gone?

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Scripture indicates that Jesus will return for His Bride (true believers) before the Great Tribulation commences, rescuing us from “the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The rapture could occur anytime (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53) so be ready!

Dr. Ed Hindson, former professor at Liberty University, eloquently stated: “Nobody knows the time, so don’t waste your time trying to guess the time, be ready all the time because Jesus can come anytime.”

Philippians 3:20-21 encourages us with words of promise as we await the rapture and the transformation of our mortal bodies into immortality:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

## Explanation for the Disappearance

By the time the rapture occurs, Christians could be so marginalized that the masses may not recognize it as the earth-shattering event it really is. Global media outlets will broadcast potential scenarios regarding the vanishing of millions of Christians. UAPs (unidentified aerial phenomena)—formerly known as UFOs (unidentified flying objects), aliens (extraterrestrials, visitors from outer space) and interdimensional beings will become increasingly prominent as an explanation for the disappearance of humans. Some will believe that the Christians were abducted for “education and enlightenment” purposes before re-entry into society. Rumors will surface that Christians have been “removed” for their refusal to conform for the supposed planetary good of humanity.

A leading occultist from my area stated during a meeting I had with him back in the 1980s: “Those who do not agree in a one world system should be, and will be, removed from this planet, so it can evolve to a higher and better plane of existence.”

If a *genuine* encounter with *aliens* (more than likely demonic beings masquerading as aliens) happens, it will be easy to fabricate a threat concerning

a possible alien invasion. It could pose a potential global crisis with a threat to humanity's very existence. This will further the push for a one-world government led by the Antichrist. Or, if these aliens were portrayed as being benevolent and helpful, it could be considered expedient for a unified humanity to gain insight from their superior knowledge and submit to their global leadership.

Nevertheless, multitudes will come to faith in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation, and I am certain the rapture (as mentioned in the Bible), will play a significant role and have a profound impact on those who had previously heard a message, read a book or been told about the rapture by a family member or friend.

## Phase One: The Rapture—Believers Will Be Transformed

The return of Jesus Christ consists of two phases: the rapture of believers and the Second Coming to Earth at Armageddon. While no one can conclusively determine from Scripture when the rapture will be, having studied the various rapture theories (pre, mid, post, pre-wrath...), I believe it will be a pre-tribulation rapture. As has been said by others, I am praying for a pre-tribulation rapture but preparing for a pre-wrath rapture. Nevertheless, you can be assured that Jesus will fulfill His promise to return:

Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:1-3).

Romans 8:19-23 accurately describes our current state in perishable bodies in a fallen world:

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

First Corinthians 15:51-55 reveals that believers will be transformed:

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable [corruptible] must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”

First Thessalonians 4:16-18 states:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

## Phase Two: The Second Coming—Coming on the Clouds

You may wonder how we can know when the true Christ returns.

According to Scripture, no one will have to wonder at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:27-31 says:

For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Luke 21:26-27 reiterates:

...for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will

see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7 declares:

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

Daniel 7:13-14 states:

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

According to *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*:

Clouds both veil and reveal the divine presence. God rides on the clouds (Isaiah 19:1; Nahum 1:3); he is present in the cloud (Exodus 19:9, 24:16, 34:5). The pillar of cloud symbolized God's presence and guidance to the children of Israel in their wilderness journeys (Exodus 40:36; Psalm 78:14).

At the Transfiguration, a bright cloud overshadowed Jesus and the disciples with Him (Matthew 17:1-5). During His trial before the chief priests, elders and scribes, Jesus was interrogated by the high priest who "said to Him, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' And Jesus said, 'I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven'" (Mark 14:61-62; also see Matthew 26:62-64).

Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives through the clouds:

He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

The signs in the heavens, Jesus returning in the clouds, the armies which

are in heaven following Him on white horses, biblical descriptions of His victory at Armageddon and the resurrection of those who were martyred for faith in Christ during the Tribulation period (Revelation 20:4), will undeniably confirm Him to be the true Messiah.

# One-World Government

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End-time scripture foretells the establishment of a world government (Revelation 13:7, 17:15-18; Daniel 7:23), a global economy (Revelation 13:16-17) and a universal religion (Revelation 13:8-12, 17:1-2, 15). It is obvious that a scenario is rapidly unfolding and revealing the creation of a worldwide system of political power, economic control, military might and religious unity. Our nation and world are rapidly and irreversibly changing—but where is all this change taking us?

A leader will arrive on the world scene coming in the guise of peace and unity—supposedly presenting solutions for the world’s dilemmas. This person, known as the Antichrist, will take the reins of the world through deception and intrigue, ultimately leading humankind in a unified rebellion against the God of the Bible. The Antichrist’s cohort, the False Prophet, will be instrumental in uniting the world’s religions into an ecumenical movement tuned to eventually worship the Antichrist. A global celebration will commence, albeit short-lived.

Since the 1970s, I have been telling about a coming unified global society with a one-world government, a one-world monetary system with the mark of the beast (666) and a one-world religion. Most people said, “It would never happen.” They thought that the world was too divided and there was no way to break down national, social, racial, cultural, political, economic, religious and territorial barriers and boundaries. Nevertheless, Scripture foretells, and developments in this nation and world confirm, that we are propelling toward the establishment of a unified global society. What seemed impossible a few decades ago is now on the near horizon as our generation is poised to witness the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold thousands of years ago. How did I know this back in the 1970s when the world was so divisive? The Bible told me so.

In 1989, I wrote in a pamphlet entitled, *Are We Living in the Last Days?*: “I have been saying for over ten years that we are heading for a unified global society. Yet, most people said, ‘You’re crazy! It will never happen.’ But guess what? Those people aren’t saying that anymore.” Now they are saying, “It is inevitable.”

Many of the world’s political and religious leaders are saying, “We are not merely dealing with national crises, we are facing global catastrophes unless we unite for the common good of the world!” However, the expected golden era of peace, prosperity and unity will become the darkest hour Earth will ever know. The people on this planet feel overwhelmed by looming crises of many kinds—terrorism, bombings, massacres, gruesome killings, weapons of mass destruction,

war, economic turmoil, loss of freedoms, natural disasters and epidemics—just to name a few.

So vast and complex are the problems facing humanity that scientists and other experts have sounded the alarm concerning potential global catastrophes or even possible annihilation. Many international leaders, obviously discounting Scripture, are recommending the only solution being the uniting of the entire world—just as Revelation prophesied 2,000 years ago.

Like cattle being herded from open meadows to corrals, citizens of many nations are methodically being prodded and positioned with an intended purpose and final goal of world dominance on a political, economic, religious and military level. Out of the chaos of our world society is about to arise a new world order, which will temporarily restore prosperity and peace and then unleash untold horrors. A world leader is about to arise who will convince most of the inhabitants of the world that he is the world's savior, but the Bible identifies him as the Antichrist.

If there is going to be a new world order and global society under the reign of Antichrist and the False Prophet, then those who will not cooperate must either be converted (to the ideology of this new regime), silenced (so as to say nothing contrary) or eliminated (put an end to by getting rid of or banishing). This is exactly what Scripture indicates is going to happen.

## Potential Worldwide Crises

Potential worldwide crises are setting the stage and propelling us toward a global society and a new world order. People throughout the world have been hearing through the media for years about crises—whether real, potential or fabricated—that could result in global catastrophes. This has programmed and prepared the people of the world for a global society as the only solution. A partial and growing list includes:

- Wars and rumors of wars
- Threat of nuclear holocaust from weapons of mass destruction
- Terrorism, mass murders and violence
- Over population
- Escalating medical, food and fuel expenses
- Global economic recession
- Worldwide famine and mass starvation
- Extreme weather conditions and natural disasters
- Water, land and air pollution
- Global warming
- Destruction of the tropical rain forests

- Epidemic infectious diseases

These and many other things have caused the world's political and religious leaders to say, "We are not merely dealing with national crises; we are facing global catastrophes. Therefore, we must unite for the common good of the world. We must lay down our personal interests for the good of the group; we must lay down our group's interest for the good of the nation; and we must lay down our national interests for the good of all humanity and our global society."

## World Changing Events

World changing events can happen—seemingly overnight. The following are just a few examples of how fast, and how unexpectedly, global happenings can alter our lives:

- **Berlin Wall Comes Down:** Circumstances progressed rapidly, and, on November 9, 1989, the East German government announced the opening of the Berlin Wall. That night, overjoyed crowds began to tear down the wall. (It is of interest to note that on November 9, 1938, 51 years to the day before the Berlin Wall was torn down, Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass was a "pogrom"—an organized massacre of a particular ethnic group—against Jews carried out by the Nazi Party.) I asked a U.S. Army Intelligence officer, who had participated in military maneuvers near the former West Germany and East Germany border, when he had found out that the Berlin Wall was coming down. He replied, "The very day it happened!" They had no idea it would come down.
- **East and West Germany Reunite:** Even with the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain removed, world leaders could not believe Germany would unite for many years, if ever. The politicians were speechless, and the news media could barely keep up with the unexpected developments as East and West Germany became one nation. It was nothing short of a miracle for East and West Germany to be officially reunited on October 3, 1990. While I was ministering in Germany in October 1990, we went on a border tour. We visited a place nicknamed "Little Berlin," which is about 10 km north of the city of Hof. I stood on the East German border where a few months earlier East German border guards would have shot me. I saw two farms which were previously on opposite sides of the wall, separated for almost 40 years. For decades, the owners, who were brothers, could only see each other and wave from a distance.
- **During my ministry trip to the U.S. Army in Germany in October 1990,** I was taken into Czechoslovakia, a former communist country. While waiting to cross the border, I saw a sign that said:

“Czechoslovakia—Socialist Republic,” but “Socialist” was scratched out.

- **Multinational Force Surrounds Iraq:** In 1991, some thought the war with Iraq was Armageddon, but I assured them it was just a stepping stone to the time when armies of the entire world would invade Israel (Zechariah 14:2; Revelation 16:13-16, 19:19).
- **Soviet Empire Is Dismantled:** The Soviet Union ceased to exist on December 31, 1991.
- **Europe Unified:** When I was in Europe in 1990, each country had its own currency and required a passport for Europeans to travel from one European country to another. When in Europe again in 2002, Europe had one currency (except UK, Denmark and Sweden) and Europeans no longer needed passports to travel to different European countries. The formation of a European confederation, known as the European Union, is a resurrection of the Roman Empire which will serve as the platform for the ascension of the Antichrist.
- **9/11 Attack:** On September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks resulted in a global war on terror and accelerated us toward a global society as the only solution. Almost one year before the events of September 11, 2001 radically changed our nation and world, I wrote the following: “New technology will result in complete surveillance and monitoring of almost every human being on Earth. There will be increasing pressure to conform to new regulations. Most people will gladly submit for the sake of convenience and so as to ‘buy and sell’ without hindrance.” The terrorist attacks sped this all up.
- **Coronavirus Outbreak:** I did my last school assemblies on February 24, 2020, then, shortly thereafter, schools across the nation were shut down. Coronavirus and its multifaceted repercussions brought us ever closer to a regime in control of every aspect of our lives.
- **Israel Restored as a Nation:** Probably the most significant, and miraculous, world-changing development of the 20th century occurred on May 14, 1948, with the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

## It Is Coming

Jewish people are back in their historic homeland. Signs of the revived Roman Empire through a unified European Community are evident. The Soviet empire has been dismantled. Alliances are being made with Russia and other nations in preparation for an invasion into Israel. The kings of the East are preparing as China has become a global super power. A new world order is imminent. Babylon the Great is being reborn. Apostasy is rampant. The focus of the world continues to be on the Middle East, Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Daily, we are moving closer to the uniting of the world on a global scale

and to the treacherous, but temporary, reign of the Antichrist and False Prophet. There is no doubt that the foreboding winds of global government, a one-world economy and a prejudiced religious system (tolerating virtually anything but true Christianity) are blowing across America and the world. Earth's final kingdom (Babylon) before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be a unified political, economic and religious system.

In order to implement this global society, there will need to be a crisis (or potential crisis) which generates enough fear to make the masses willing to accept the recommended solutions. The only nation powerful enough to thwart world conquest and all that entails is the United States. Therefore, the U.S. must be militarily weakened or be transformed from nationalism to globalism. This being accomplished, the global elite will be able to dictate every aspect of the lives of virtually everyone on this planet—unwittingly leading to the fulfillment of Revelation 13 and the worldwide reign of the one revealed in Scripture as the Antichrist.

Two thousand years ago, the Bible forewarned that the Antichrist would come disguised in false peace and unity. Under the pretense of solving the world's crises, he will initiate a global society with the inability to buy or sell without his mark on your hand or forehead—surrendering your total allegiance to him and his rule. Comply or die!

For over 50 years, I have warned about what is coming, striving to prepare the Body of Christ for what is now upon us. Globalists may refer to it as *The Great Reset*, but the Bible calls it the coming kingdom of the Antichrist. What seems so brilliant and beneficial will result in the darkest and most diabolical period in human history.

Nevertheless, we must not be discouraged or fearful because all of our future hopes and dreams are in Christ—not in ourselves, not in a political party, not in a world leader and not in a worldly kingdom. (Read John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.)

Let those who so desire to have their kingdom on this Earth enjoy their day and their temporary empire; they may get what they want, but they will not want what they get (see Revelation 17 and 18). This temporary time of unprecedented unity, prosperity and immorality is rapidly coming upon the world and its “church,” but it will be a unity, prosperity and immorality of which you will not want any part!

## Is There Hope?

As believers in Jesus Christ, our day and eternal Kingdom is also coming—after the destruction of Babylon the Great. We will inherit all we could ever imagine or desire—and far more! Our inheritance in Christ will abundantly satisfy us for ever and ever.

Jesus puts everything in perspective: “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

Assuredly, one day, the following prophecy will become a reality: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

In the midst of Jeremiah’s extreme lamentations for Judah’s destruction by the Babylonians, the Holy Spirit inspired him to pen the following promise for the people of his time (and for us today):

I recall this to my mind, therefore I wait. The LORD’s acts of mercy indeed do not end, for His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I wait for Him.” The LORD is good to those who await Him, to the person who seeks Him (Lamentations 3:21-25).

## Our Top Priority

At Christ’s first coming, the Jews expected Him to provide physical conquest of their despised enemies, the occupying Romans, while God’s purpose was to provide spiritual redemption. Today, many Christians focus their energy and resources on political conquest, while God’s priority is for us to share the Gospel in our local community, across cultural barriers and throughout the world (Acts 1:8). Believers’ top priority must be for evangelism and leading others to Jesus Christ. Certainly, we realize that someone does not make it into the Kingdom of God because of their political party or on account of good morality. Access into God’s eternal Kingdom is only gained through accepting the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the atonement for our inherent sin.

In recent years, many political factions have been committed, combined and consolidated in their quest to establish their “kingdom” on this Earth. How much more should followers of Christ be committed, combined and consolidated in zeal to bring people into His Millennial and Eternal Kingdom?

As believers in Jesus Christ, we must have greater passion in reaching people with His love and truth than in obtaining political dominance over this nation and the world. It is imperative that we focus the majority of our remaining time, energy and resources toward reaching this world for Christ before His return. May we be found faithful when He comes!

# Unity of Religion

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The Bible foretells a blessed age to come of love, peace, unity and prosperity when Christ returns to rule and reign. However, before Christ's Millennial Kingdom on Earth comes, Scripture repeatedly warns of an unequaled time of deception. No warning concerning the time before Christ's return is stressed more than that of deception and delusion. The ultimate deception will be the diabolical reign of the Antichrist and his accomplice, the supreme false spiritual leader identified as the False Prophet. This occult-empowered system of delusion and oppression is referred to as "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5).

Scripture is clear that the devious world of the end times will be infested with error, fraud, fakery, counterfeits, lies, deceit, intrigue and treachery. No wonder Jesus' first admonition in His famous Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 and 25; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36), which contains some of the most important prophetic material in the Bible, is to beware and watch "that no one misleads [deceives] you" (Matthew 24:4).

As well as Jesus, the Apostles Peter, John and Paul warn of pervasive deception in the end times. Paul foretells that, before Christ's coming, there will be a great apostasy and the man of lawlessness (Antichrist) will be revealed. A strong delusion will come upon all who do not love the truth and they will believe Satan's lie that the Antichrist is the promised Messiah and Savior of the world. A satanic regime is about to arise as global elitists use religious, economic, military and governmental persuasion to mastermind intercontinental control.

## Main Descriptive Word—Deception

One of the main descriptive words of the last days is deception. Scripture warns repeatedly of an unprecedented time of insidious deception and delusion. The world will be offered false prophets, false miracles, false teachings, a false revival, a false messiah, a false peace and a false unity.

Jesus warned about false prophets and false christs:

See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and they will mislead many. And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect (Matthew

24:4-5, 11, 24).

The Apostle Paul cautioned about the apostasy and counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders:

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy [falling away from the faith] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-12).

Paul also warned about deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

Paul reveals there will be those who will not endure sound doctrine but will want to have their ears tickled:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The Apostle John warns about the whole Earth being deceived because of the signs the False Prophet performs in the presence of the Antichrist:

He [False Prophet] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [Antichrist] who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two

were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Revelation 13:13-14, 19:20).

The beast (False Prophet) that John saw coming up out of the earth “had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon” (Revelation 13:11) seems to indicate his outward imitation of the true Lamb, Jesus Christ, but his inward nature is ravenous. The False Prophet’s deception is increased because of its similarity to the truth. Near the end of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned:

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15).

Until the return of Jesus Christ, there will be a continuous barrage of false prophets who appear to be sheep. They will talk like sheep, look like sheep and, seemingly, act like sheep, but, inwardly, they are ravenous wolves whose true desire is to devour sheep. Those infiltrated and influenced by them will redefine, reject and, ultimately, remove sound biblical teaching by replacing it with more appealing “human wisdom” that distorts, denies and displaces crucial doctrines of the Christian faith such as original sin, the substitutionary atonement of Jesus, the existence of hell, marriage, sexual purity and more.

## Two Opposite Unities

For many years, I have seen two unities on the horizon. Now, they are rapidly coming into formation. There is a unity of true believers in Christ—those committed to biblical Christianity. This scripturally based unity consists of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, believe He is the promised Messiah, God incarnate and the only way of salvation, believe in salvation through faith because of His shed blood and resurrection and are not involving themselves in unscriptural beliefs, practices and phenomena which are sweeping the apostate church. They are walking in obedience to God’s Word and Spirit and have unity of “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).

There is also a growing unity of delusion and deception on a level the world has never seen before. I warned about its coming for many years, and now it is happening. The current false unity movement is rapidly merging lukewarm, apostate Christianity with New Age spirituality and the various religions of the world to achieve its ultimate goals. These goals include such humanly appealing concepts as global unification, a worldwide celebration of peace and joy, the achieving of individual godhood, cleansing the Earth of all evil and the establishing of “God’s Kingdom.” The “apostate” church wrongly believes the false unity and peace movement as revival. The ultimate end of this counterfeit love and unity will be the worship of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8).

Occultism, Eastern mysticism, New Age spirituality and the human

potential movement are all coming together. They are basically the same, teaching that humans are the ultimate source of value and that we are gods; all we have to do is realize our divinity and thereby achieve “Transcendental Enlightenment,” equivalent to “God-consciousness.” They teach that there is no sin, so there is no need for a crucified and resurrected Savior. Combine that with apostate Christianity which is proclaiming a popular message of love and unity to the masses, and you have what I believe will be the religious system that the coming Antichrist and False Prophet will use to deceive the world.

The world’s religions will have no problem uniting with a watered-down, noncommittal Christianity with a pretense of unconditional love, unquestioning acceptance and purported signs and wonders. This superficial unity will be initially inclusive of virtually every type of religion and all forms of spirituality but will become increasingly intolerant and hostile toward the Bible and Jesus Christ. Even now, those who use God’s Word to speak out against depraved social trends are being accused of bigotry, intolerance and hate crimes with the aim to quiet or remove them.

In the Old Testament, Babylon was the center of occultism (Isaiah 47). Babylon represented a pagan culture rebellious against God—wicked, immoral, proud and haughty, trusting in their own wisdom, sorceries and spells. John identifies the great prostitute, the religious system prophesied in Revelation 17, as BABYLON THE GREAT. I find it noteworthy that New Age spirituality and apostate Christianity closely resemble the description of Babylon in the Old Testament and Revelation. We are seeing a revival of occultism and sorcery today which is infiltrating every aspect of society: education, science, environmentalism, medicine, health, psychology, politics and religion—in virtually every nation of the world.

## Similar Mystical Experiences and Revelations

It is intriguing to discover that many people around the globe are having similar mystical experiences and visions through such means as meditation, hallucinogenic drugs, trance channeling, séances, supposed UAP (unidentified aerial phenomenon) encounters and contact with spirit guides. During these experiences, they allegedly meet entities who claim to be aliens, ascended masters, angels, Jesus, et cetera. They proclaim a message that we are all gods, there is no sin and that all religions must unite because a global leader is about to come on the scene to save our planet and usher in an enlightened age of peace and prosperity—a virtual utopia.

False prophets, influenced by demonic entities, will perform impressive miracles to validate their lying messages. There will be an escalation of false signs and wonders as well as strange phenomena.

In these end times, beware of several growing trends. First, the false unity movement. Second, subjective experiences and phenomena that go beyond the Word of God. Third, false prophecies, false signs and wonders. We are living in a day of great deception, and Scripture strongly indicates it is going to accelerate.

Many professing Christians who believe that unity of religion is the ultimate goal, allow subjective emotions to determine their truth, seek after miraculous experiences more than knowing Christ, lack discernment and neglect in-depth study of Scripture, will be deceived by the deluding influence Paul warned would overtake those who did not have a love for the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10). If so many are confused now and being caught off guard, what will happen as the deception gets even more difficult to discern as false teachings and prophecies as well as counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders escalate?

## Generation Raised on Occultism

The Bible and faith in Christ are being systematically removed from today's culture while being replaced with an insatiable appetite for sorcery, supernatural phenomena and powers, as well as violence and sexual immorality. Youth and adults are being programmed, seduced and deceived through occult movies, cartoons, music, games, the printed page, media and the internet. Then, consider the influence of alcohol, mind-altering and hallucinogenic drugs, the growing popularity of mind-body-spirit healing techniques and meditative practices to achieve altered states of consciousness. These are not paths to human enlightenment but demonic deception. No wonder Paul prophesied that a "deluding influence" will overtake the world.

What do you think this generation will do when the Antichrist appears, "the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9)? And whose partner, the False Prophet, "performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (Revelation 13:13)? Of course they will idolize him, for "All who dwell on the earth will worship him [Antichrist], everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (Revelation 13:8).

## Antichrist Appears to Be Messiah

The world will soon be offered the Antichrist. Non-Christians and the apostate church will initially believe him to be the Savior of the world who has come to usher in a New Age, an age of peace and prosperity. Many Jews will at first receive him to be their long-awaited Messiah. Even New Agers are teaching that Christ is coming again. However, the Christ they are proclaiming is not the One of the Bible but a supposed reincarnation of the Christ spirit. The world will be under a "deluding influence" (2 Thessalonians 2:11) and think this beguiling leader is of God because he will appear so wonderful and powerful due to the miraculous manifestations he will use to deceive and unite the people and religions of the world.

What I call a "whirlwind effect" (which I witnessed with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the uniting of Germany) will quickly catch the inhabitants

of the Earth in the excitement of this new world leader that they will not know what is really happening until it is too late. Underneath the facade of the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be the stamp of the serpent whom they represent. One day, that facade will be removed, but it will be too late for those who have taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11).

## The Siren Song of Unity

*by Jim Weikal, a biblical researcher  
who has been part of our ministry team for many years:*

Today, the world's leaders are singing an enchanting song of unification very similar to the days of Babel:

They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).

We have a comparable message coming from the world's leaders. The Church is subtly being directed toward "Christian" unity—a unity not based on the Holy Scriptures and biblical doctrine but founded on social issues and emotional experiences. Many pastors and believers attending ecumenical gatherings are promoting beliefs not in accord with biblical Christianity. Pastors and other church leaders cannot blindly accept short-term benefits and not consider the long-range consequences. The long-range consequences of uniting with movements that want religious unity over biblical unity will be compromising pastors, diminishing reliance on the Word and doctrine, lukewarm congregations, unholy alliances with any faith and eventually embracing the religion of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. The Bible speaks of a false world religion in the end times that is an offense to Christ. The whole Church may seem to be succumbing to the unification movement, but a remnant still exists today who have not bowed down to every new wave, new teaching or new experience that comes along. They have not united around social issues, signs and wonders or a lowest-common-denominator biblical standard that any religion can join. They search the Scriptures daily, they fast, they worship, they deny themselves, they seek God's face through prayer and supplication. Their hearts are turned toward their God, asking Him what He desires. Believers like this are united. As the unity/all-inclusive pressure increases, those opposing will be considered obstructions to a move of God. Any opposing views will be condemned as divisive, negative, proud, unloving, narrow, radical or some other malicious label. Don't let a false unity movement lure you away from biblical Christianity or cause you to make a compromised commitment to the Jesus of the Bible. Instead, stand in true biblical unity.

# The Perfect Storm for Deception

Today, many Christians and even pastors lack discernment, deficient in knowledge of prophetic scripture, devoting little time to the study of God's Word and prayer, while spending too much time in unprofitable activities, sometimes engaged in behavior which compromises them morally. They are not prepared nor are they preparing the body of Christ for what is coming.

With the need for spiritual discernment disregarded, we are living in an ideal environment for the perfect storm for deception. Is it any wonder that people today are increasingly rejecting biblical truth while embracing atheism, paganism, mysticism, occultism and throwing off all moral restraints to follow a path of wanton pleasure.

## Examine Scripture

Since Jesus and the apostles warned about apostasy and deception in the end times, why are so many pastors accepting or endorsing unbiblical and anti-biblical teachings under their watch as shepherds?

Several years ago, I performed the wedding of a professor from an elite university. Attending the wedding was an out-of-state pastor. At the reception, she told me of her concern for the Church and how attendance was dwindling. Continuing in conversation, she informed me that she believes in evolution and accepts virtually all beliefs and lifestyles. She also told me about several techniques she had learned and was teaching to her congregation—techniques that were pure New Age spirituality.

I told this pastor she needs to examine, in context, the prophecies of Jesus and the apostles concerning Christ's Second Coming. I assured her that, just as the prophecies of Christ's first coming were accurately fulfilled, so will the prophecies of His Second Coming. Besides, Jesus and the apostles precisely foretold the spiritual condition of the Church in the end times. She was unfamiliar with Paul's prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2 about the great apostasy and strong delusion, yet she is part of its very fulfillment. I pray God opens her eyes and the eyes of all pastors and believers to have discernment and to stand strong for biblical Christianity in these times of compromise.

## Warnings

Let me emphasize again some of the biblical warnings concerning deception. Do those who distance themselves from the clear teachings of Scripture and who embrace today's corrupt culture not realize they are actually fulfilling end-time prophecy? Are they unaware of, or simply ignoring:

- Jesus' warning of false prophets, false christs and of being lukewarm (Matthew 24:5, 11 and 24; Revelation 3:16);

- Paul’s warning of apostasy (falling away from the faith), false signs and wonders, deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-12; 1 Timothy 4:1);
- Peter’s warning of false prophets and false teachers who introduce destructive heresies (2 Peter 2:1-15);
- Jude’s warning of godless men who change the grace of our God into license for immorality (Jude 4);
- John’s warning to not be deceived by false signs and miracles (Revelation 13:13-14 and 19:20).
- The beliefs and practices of many Christian leaders and their followers exemplify what God’s Word warns believers to come out from (2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4). This is not a day to drift from Scripture or to accept so called “new revelations,” but a critical time to remain firmly grounded in the Bible lest the prophecies of falling away from the faith become true of you, your church or ministry.

## A Word to Pastors

As shepherds, you are responsible to the Lord regarding what you teach and what you allow in your church. Protect your flock from false teachers—from wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Develop discernment through consistent, deep Bible study and prayer. Resist the temptations of greed and immorality. Don’t be consumed with desire for pleasure, popularity and power.

Don’t fade into the pages of lukewarm Christianity as did the Laodicean church whom Jesus warned would be vomited out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16). Note that our Lord extended mercy and offered restoration to the Church at Laodicea: “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

Take a few minutes to ponder Jesus’ parable of the faithful and the wicked servants the master put in charge of his household (Matthew 24:45-51). When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, may you prove to be a wise and loyal servant.

Do not let a fearful day of reckoning await you because you built your own kingdom on Earth, twisting God’s Word to condone your beliefs and lifestyle. Rather, receive honor in Christ’s Millennial Kingdom because you remained faithful to Him and His Word.

The Lord is searching the heart and examining the lifestyle of each pastor, Christian leader and believer. If you are tolerating anything contrary to His Word or Spirit, now is the time to repent and be faithful in all things. Judgment begins with the house of God, then moves to the world and apostate church. 1 Peter 4:17 states: “For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the

gospel of God?"

The days in which we live require much faith, courage and discernment which come only through knowing Scripture and being led by God's Spirit. I close this chapter with Paul's final words to the Corinthians: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

# The Unholy Trinity

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Throughout history, Satan has attempted to mimic the true God of creation. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in these end times, Satan's imitation of the Divine Trinity will soon be revealed.

## Dragon, Antichrist and False Prophet

Revelation 13 introduces us to the unholy trinity composed of: the dragon (Satan), a beast coming up out of the sea (Antichrist) and a beast coming up out of the Earth (False Prophet). God describes them as they really are: Satan as a dragon—a fierce devourer and destroyer; Antichrist as a beast—vicious, violent and dangerous; the False Prophet as a beast and exactly what his name indicates in Revelation 16:13—he is a *false prophet*. God uses these words to indicate their true nature and intent, but the world will not initially see them that way. Deceived by surface appearance, the masses of humanity will believe the Antichrist and False Prophet to be good, when in fact they are extremely evil.

During the Tribulation period, Satan (dragon) will seek to imitate God the Father by giving his authority to the Antichrist (Revelation 13:4). The satanically possessed Antichrist will be a counterfeit of God's Son, masquerading as the messiah and savior of the world. Just as Jesus died and rose again, Satan's false messiah will appear to die and rise from the dead (Revelation 13:3, 14; 17:8, 11). The False Prophet will mimic the work of the Holy Spirit by attempting to influence the world to receive, obey and worship the Antichrist (Revelation 13:11-18).

Revelation 13:1-8, 11-12 gives us a clearer image of this satanic trinity:

And the dragon [Satan] stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast [Antichrist] coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war

with him?’ [A time is coming when no one on this planet can resist the power and the military force of the Antichrist.] There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the [Tribulation] saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”

Then I saw another beast [False Prophet] coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

What Satan is seeking to attain is complete treachery—impersonating the Holy Trinity with his unholy trinity. This is far worse than someone stealing your identity, then impersonating you in an effort to take over your house, possessions, spouse and family.

Revelation 16:13-14 gives some additional insight on this unholy trinity:

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs [especially foul, slimy, deceitful, and powerful demonic entities resembling frogs]; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Just as the spirits that influenced Hitler led to World War II, likewise, the Dragon, Antichrist, False Prophet and the evil spirits operating through them will lead the armies of the world to Armageddon where they will meet their demise.

The following are “portraits” of each member of the unholy trinity.

## Portrait of the Dragon (Satan)

The Bible clearly reveals there is a devil. We meet him in Genesis 3 and continue to read of him all the way to Revelation 20. He was endowed with beauty, wisdom and a superior position of authority in God’s creation. Pride and rebellion caused his fall and his becoming Satan (the adversary). Satan and the

angels who joined the rebellion (known as evil spirits or demons) attempt to oppose the plan and purpose of God. The angels who rebelled with Satan appear to be divided into two main categories. One group of demons is active in our world today, while another group is already imprisoned (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Luke 8:31).

We can learn a great deal about who Satan is by looking at some of the different names and descriptions of him throughout Scripture, such as:

- Accuser (Revelation 12:10)
- Adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
- Anointed cherub (Ezekiel 28:14)
- Deceiver (Revelation 12:9, 20:3)
- Devil (slanderer) (Matthew 4:1, 13:39; Ephesians 4:27; Revelation 12:9, 20:2)
- Dragon (Revelation 12:3, 7, 9, 20:2)
- Evil one (Matthew 13:19, 38; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:18)
- God of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- Liar and father of lies (John 8:44)
- Murderer (John 8:44)
- Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
- Roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)
- Ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
- Satan (adversary) (Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 12:9, 20:2)
- Serpent (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9, 20:2)
- Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)

## Portrait of the Antichrist

- Described as a beast, the man of lawlessness and son of destruction (Revelation 13:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- Satan gives him his power and authority (Revelation 13:2)
- Fatal head wound is healed (Revelation 13:3)
- The whole world is amazed and follows him (Revelation 13:3)
- Military and political domination—"Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" (Revelation 13:4)
- Uses signs and false wonders to deceive the world (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

- All who dwell on the Earth worship him—except those whose names are written in the Book of Life (Revelation 13:4, 8)
- Authority to act for forty-two months (Revelation 13:5)
- Mouth uttering great boasts (Daniel 7:8)
- Speaks arrogant words and blasphemes God, His name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in Heaven (Revelation 13:5-6)
- Speaks against the Most High and oppresses his holy people (Daniel 7:25, 8:24-25)
- Kills God's Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:7)
- Makes war with the saints and overcomes them (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:7)
- World domination—authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (Revelation 13:7)
- Controls global economy (Revelation 13:16-17)
- Possessed by demonic spirit (Revelation 16:13)
- Rules by international consent (Revelation 17:12-13)
- Establishes seven-year peace treaty with Israel but breaks it in the middle (Daniel 9:27)
- Displays himself as God in the Temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
- Demands to be worshipped (Revelation 13:12, 15, 14:9, 11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4)
- Turns against the apostate church (harlot) and, with the help of his 10 sub-rulers, will plunder and destroy her (Revelation 17:16-17)
- Assembles the kings of the Earth and their armies to make war against Christ at His Second Coming (Revelation 19:19)
- The Lord will slay him with the breath of His mouth and defeat him with the appearance of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- Seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:10)

## Portrait of the False Prophet

- Appears as a lamb but speaks like a dragon (Revelation 13:11)
- Exercises all of the authority of the Antichrist in his presence (Revelation 13:12)
- Makes those who dwell on the Earth worship the Antichrist whose fatal wound was healed (Revelation 13:12)
- Performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down out of

heaven to the earth (Revelation 13:13)

- Deceives those who dwell on the Earth because of the signs he performs (Revelation 13:14)
- Tells those who dwell on the Earth to make an image of the Antichrist who was wounded by the sword and lived (Revelation 13:14)
- Gives breath to the image of the beast so that it speaks and causes those who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed (Revelation 13:15)
- Causes all to be given a mark on their right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:16)
- Forbids anyone who does not have the identifying mark of the beast to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17)
- Possessed by demonic spirit (Revelation 16:13)
- Seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 19:20, 20:10)

## Defeated at the Cross

The satanic principalities and powers were defeated at the cross (John 12:31, 16:11; Colossians 2:15), but continue their evil deception and influences in the present age (Ephesians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 2:10) until they are stripped of all power at Christ's return.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ triumphed over principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15) and rendered powerless him who had the power of death—that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). After Satan is bound and thrown into the abyss (bottomless pit) for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2-3), he will be released to deceive the nations one last time (Revelation 20:7-8). He will then be thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever and ever in the eternal fire prepared for him and his angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

# The Antichrist and False Prophet

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The pages of history are filled with accounts of new movements generating such enthusiasm and momentum that a nation—even the world—was swayed. As a teen in the late 1960s, many of my generation got caught up in the sexual revolution, race riots and counterculture rebellion against authority. Very few of us really thought about why we were involved or where these movements were headed. We were seized by the emotion of the moment and went with the flow of the crowd.

Hitler's media propaganda and hypnotizing speeches influenced a generation, changed a nation and impacted the world. Today, the global media are manipulating and motivating youth and adults to become part of a movement that will one day become a regime controlled by a world leader who promises peace, prosperity, love and unity.

Fear of an epidemic or pandemic, carnage from terrorism, devastation from natural disasters, threat of nuclear annihilation or the need to solve other potential global crises is motivating an increasing number of voices to cry for a global leader who will eventually acquire "authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (Revelation 13:7).

The word "antichrist" is only found in the letters of the Apostle John (1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3; 2 John 7). The prefix "anti" means "against" or "in place of." Although there were many antichrists in John's day, there is one yet to come at the end of the age who will embody the various descriptive words concerning him laced throughout the Bible.

One day, a dynamic political leader and an influential religious leader will arise with deceptive motives. They will have great charisma, persuasive speech, hypnotizing words, cleverness to solve world problems, miraculous powers and incredible influence as visionary leaders, but their true intents will be concealed with intrigue and deception. Their winning words, pleasing promises, cheering crowds and supernatural strength will mesmerize the multitudes. These two "rising stars" will be demonically energized, and they will lead a world of undiscerning people down a path of global and eternal destruction. Our world is ripe for a world leader who will attain the role of Antichrist and a global religious leader who will actualize the position of the False Prophet (Revelation 13).

It is obvious that the world is being prepared for the deceptive and seductive reign of the Antichrist. As Satan incarnated, the Antichrist's ulterior motive will be to attain control over and receive worship from all the people on

this planet (2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 13). The False Prophet will attempt to help him achieve this—which has always been Satan’s ultimate goal.

During Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, he offered Him all of the kingdoms of the world if He would bow down and worship him. Jesus rejected his offer, but the Antichrist will accept Satan’s offer and become possessed by him for doing so. Only two people in Scripture were possessed by Satan himself: Judas, when he betrayed Jesus, and the Antichrist, as he seeks to gain control over and obtain worship from everyone on this planet.

Although this world leader will appear on the world scene as a savior, he will cause more deception, distress, death, disaster and desolation than any other person in history.

## Antichrist Operates for 42 Months

Before long, a person will rise up who appears to be good but soon unbelievable atrocities will become evident. The Antichrist’s 42-month reign most likely begins right after Satan loses access to Heaven. At that point, having great wrath and knowing that he has only a short time (Revelation 12:7-12), he presumably possesses the Antichrist, as he did Judas (Luke 22:3). Possessed and empowered by Satan, Antichrist will proclaim himself as God in the rebuilt Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. When the Jews reject his dreadful blasphemy, he begins a horrendous campaign to annihilate Israel and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus. That’s why Jesus indicated the second half of the Tribulation would consist of “great tribulation”:

For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short (Matthew 24:21-22).

## Mark of the Beast (666) and Image of the Beast

Revelation 13 foretells a coming day when people will not be able to buy or sell without a mark on their right hand or forehead. The mark will either be the name of the Beast (Antichrist) or the number of his name (666). For almost 2,000 years, this prophesy did not make sense or seem feasible. Today, it does!

When I first became a Christian in 1971, I shared with a weightlifting buddy about end-time prophecy and the mark of the beast. He laughed and said it could never happen. I said, “Well then, at least remember this. Don’t ever take the number 666 or the name of the Antichrist on your right hand or forehead.” He responded, “If it ever comes to that, I will not take the mark of the beast, for I would know the Bible is God’s Word and Revelation is true.” My friend is now very close to realizing that God’s Word and Revelation are true. Modern technology has the capability to literally fulfill Revelation 13:16-17:

And he [False Prophet] causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, and he decrees that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast [Antichrist] or the number of his name.

In countries around the world, including the U.S., personal and religious freedoms are being lost at unprecedented rates. Texts, e-mails and cell phone calls are monitored. Surveillance cameras are virtually everywhere. Posts on social media and the internet are removed if not consistent with current mores. Growing numbers of people are being injected with experimental ID chips in their hands.

Shortly after 9/11 I wrote the following:

While advanced technology for identification and surveillance appears to be a necessary fact of life in this increasingly violent and information-saturated world, soon virtually every person on this planet will be monitored and eventually controlled. More sophisticated methods of identification and the compiling of background information on every single human being on this planet are being developed.

Keep in mind that the book of Revelation was written nearly 2,000 years ago when the basic weapons were swords and spears, and the communication system was written words and face-to-face conversation. Yet, the Apostle John, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, foretold with precise detail the world system in which you and I are now living.

Technology is available to not just imprint a number on human flesh, but to implant a microchip under the skin with considerable data. The Antichrist, not having infinite knowledge like God, will have at his disposal the technology to monitor every human being on this planet, thus giving him apparent omniscience.

An image set up in honor of the Antichrist will be given breath so that it can speak and that all who refuse to worship the image will be killed (Revelation 13:14-15). At this point in the Tribulation, there are only two viable options—commit your life to Jesus Christ and face probable martyrdom or worship the Antichrist.

Many years ago, as I watched the image of a man being projected on a large screen before a vast auditorium filled with people to whom he was speaking, it occurred to me that this is one possible means for giving breath to the image of the Antichrist. Without discounting the possibility of demonic phenomena and counterfeit miracles, there are other potential options for fulfilling this once perplexing prophecy such as using sophisticated computer technology combined with biomechanical or virtual reality (simulated

experience). Robots are being created in the field of AI (artificial intelligence). Mechanical and electrical components are used to simulate living creatures in animatronics. Also, voice recognition systems, 3-D replicas, holograms and interactive visual environments are all intriguing possibilities. In such an interactive electronic world, we can now understand how it is possible for an image to appear to be alive, be able to speak and even recognize who is or who is not worshipping it.

Biometric identification (involving the automated recognition of individuals by means of unique physical features) and embedded microchips may enable the image of the beast (probably artificial intelligence that will be so sophisticated in the near future as it is developing at an exponential rate) to perceive the thoughts and feelings of people so as to not only identify, but to automatically respond or put to death those who are not worshipping the Antichrist.

World Economic Forum (WEF) founder and chairman Klaus Schwab commented during his keynote address at the World Government Summit 2023:

And we are just now where we move into the exponential phase, artificial intelligence, not only artificial intelligence, but also the metaverse [a virtual-reality space in which users can interact with a computer-generated environment and other users], new space technologies [includes spacecraft, satellites, space stations, and support infrastructure, equipment, and procedures and space warfare]. And I could go on and on. Synthetic biology [interdisciplinary branch of biology and engineering], our life in ten years from now will be completely different. Very much affected. And who masters those technologies, in some way, will be the master of the world.

Technology and artificial intelligence continues to advance at an astonishing rate, ultimately providing the Antichrist and False Prophet with apparent omniscience and omnipotence.

A global leader will arise, revealed in Scripture as the Antichrist, but coming in the guise of goodness and pure motives as Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light! Every person who identifies with his regime will have an identification mark on their hand or forehead in order to be able to buy and sell in the global economy.

The time approaches when the powers that be will impose a test of loyalty and means of identification in Antichrist's regime with the actual 666 foretold and forewarned in Revelation 13. Many will be quick to take the mark of the beast so strongly warned against in Scripture (Revelation 13:16, 14:11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4). Everyone alive during the Tribulation period will either take the mark or face elimination.

Revelation 13:18 gives us the following clue concerning the identity of the Antichrist:

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

The number of man is 6 because man was created on the sixth day. The number of God is 7 because it represents completion and perfection since, on the seventh day of creation, God rested from His work which he declared to be good or perfect.

In the Hebrew language, superlatives are expressed by repeating the word or phrase, the ultimate being its repetition three times such as, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME” (Revelation 4:8). Also, the “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!” (Revelation 8:13). The number 666 therefore represents the ultimate man.

In many languages (including Hebrew, Greek and Latin), the letters of the alphabet also have numerical value. Those with biblical insight during the Tribulation period will be able to identify the Antichrist because his name will have the numerical equivalence of 666.

Daymond R. Duck and Larry Richards share the following insight in their book, *Revelation: God’s Word for the Biblically-Inept*:

Two things are important here: how to calculate the number, and why it is 666. To calculate the number one needs to know that things have changed since John wrote Revelation. The modern world has two sets of symbols—the alphabet and numbers. We use two systems. A letter is a letter, and a number is a number. But the ancient world did not do this; they used a single set of symbols to represent both letters and numbers. Such a system is called an “alphanumeric system.” Every number is a letter, and every letter is a number. In an alphanumeric system, every word has a numeric value, every sentence has a numeric value, every paragraph has a numeric value, etc. The same is true of every name. Every name has a numeric value. This is how to calculate the number of the name of Antichrist. It will be 666 in somebody’s alphanumeric system (Hebrew, Greek, computer, etc.).

## You Are Being Watched

Pause for a moment and think about all the new devices and technologies, such as vehicles, televisions, cell phones, computers, surveillance gadgets, doorbell cameras, fitness trackers, etc.—infused with microphones, cameras and artificial intelligence (AI)—claiming to make our lives safer and easier, but they can also be used as effective spying tools. Face scanners, smart phones, smart

homes, eyelid-tracking car dashboard cameras, camera-equipped drones. Devices that see, hear and track the people they encounter. In spite of many privacy scandals and security breaches, people are getting more accustomed to everyday uses of surveillance technology.

Someone wants to know where you are and what you are doing, saying, watching, listening to, buying or selling. They want to know about your job, church attendance, political activities, medical treatments and where you travel. Eventually, this technology will be used to monitor and control virtually everything about you. Sounds strangely similar to the total surveillance, monitoring and control that will one day be enforced (Revelation 13:16-17). It is now easy to conceive of how those who defy or disobey the Antichrist's demands will be fined, imprisoned or eventually martyred. Many people will report the slightest violations of their neighbors and family to the authorities (Matthew 10:21, 24:9-10).

It seems like we could be on the verge of a total loss of freedom and the fulfillment of Revelation 6 and 13. Take a few minutes to read these chapters and ponder the condition of your heart before God who foretold this 2,000 years ago.

## Satan's Marathon

If you have never jogged before, you probably will not wake up one morning and decide to run a marathon that day; you must begin a conditioning process. Well, the marathon Satan wants to run (and win) is to impose the "mark of the beast" on the entire population, thereby gaining global dominion.

To achieve this goal, he must gradually condition people to accept it. Real and fabricated crises push us toward a global government—which, eventually, the Antichrist will control.

Not being able to buy or sell without a mask will eventually give way to not being able to buy or sell without a mark.

Hostility toward those who don't wear the mask and reporting fellow citizens (even family members) to the authorities for noncompliance, will give way to a much greater hostility for those who refuse to take the mark and unite for the supposed common good of the world.

## Terrorism Will Be Defeated

Terrorists will not overcome the world (as many have feared) but will be defeated. The war on terrorism is actually a catalyst moving us toward the establishment of a one-world regime seeking dominance over every person on this planet. A global coalition, eventually led by the prophesied Antichrist, will ultimately defeat terrorism. Scripture reveals that no human force will be able to wage war against the Antichrist and prevail. He will be given temporary authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

The Antichrist will defeat and subdue the enemies of Israel in a pretense to

be the Messiah. A peace treaty signed with Israel will be broken three-and-a-half years later as the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem is desecrated by the Antichrist. A holocaust of unparalleled proportions and a reign of horrific terror will commence, making the heinous attacks and murders of today's terrorists seem mild in comparison. A global bloodbath of Jews and believers in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah will exceed anything the world has ever experienced.

## Who Would Take the Mark of the Beast?

Cash can be counterfeited, checks can be forged, credit cards can be stolen and ID information can be compromised, so the ultimate solution is what Revelation foretells: a mark on the right hand or forehead for the exchange of goods and services.

It is virtually impossible to rent cars, book airline tickets, reserve hotel rooms or order items online without a credit card. There is nothing wrong with credit cards (unless you overcharge or pay interest), however, physical currency, credit cards, debit cards and smart cards will become outdated, leading to a predominantly digital system and central bank. No one will be able to buy or sell without a mark on the right hand or forehead. Those who refuse this mark will face possible starvation, unemployment, persecution and martyrdom.

You might ask, "Who would take the mark of the beast?" I remember back in the mid-1970s when I was going to Bible college. There was a supposed gas shortage, so people would line up for blocks to get their rationed amount. If someone cut in line, people would become irate, sometimes violent—doing almost anything to get gas for their vehicles. To what extent will people go to save their jobs or lives, provide food and shelter for their families, protect their assets or get health care and medication? Besides, it will more than likely be in vogue to take the mark—just as the media and society today glamorize many trends and behaviors that the Bible condemns.

The main motivation today for many utilizing microchip implants may merely be to locate a pet or child, gain access to medical records or provide a convenient way to buy items. However, during the Tribulation period, without the mark of the beast, people will be unable to get a job, pay bills, buy food, sell items, obtain fuel to heat or cool their house, prove their identity or affirm that they have been vaccinated.

People will be deceived by the world's foremost spiritual leader, the False Prophet, whose seemingly miraculous signs and wonders are causing multitudes to take the mark of the beast. To complicate deception even more, some undiscerning or deceitful people will twist Ezekiel 9:3-6, Revelation 7:3 and Revelation 14:1 about God's mark, seal or name on the foreheads of His people, to condone taking the mark of the beast, erroneously thinking they are taking God's mark.

How will someone be able to differentiate between the seal of God and the mark of the beast? Only by knowing the Word of God and the voice of His Spirit. Therefore, scriptural insight and spiritual discernment are invaluable. Those who

have heard or read what the Bible says about 666 and the mark of the beast will know not to take it. They may lose their physical life, but they will gain eternity.

I was talking to a Christian about the mark of the beast and the strong warning in Revelation not to take it. To my amazement, he responded that he thought this mark would be a good idea. He reasoned that a cashless society and one-world government would benefit humanity, and, therefore, God would never be opposed to something that was helpful. When I told him to examine what Revelation had to say on this subject, he said he did not have time. However, since that time, he started studying the Bible and prophetic scripture and has completely changed his perspective.

## God's Irrevocable Judgment

Some make light of 666 and the mark of the beast but that is pure folly. Revelation 16:2 foretells loathsome and malignant sores appearing on the bodies of those who take the mark of the beast and who worship his image. These loathsome and malignant sores could be from a plague, STDs, radioactive fallout or something else. When I was bitten by a brown recluse spider, I had one extremely painful and loathsome sore for two months. I bumped it many times and had it squeezed or stepped on by my grandchildren. The pain was excruciating, and, though I only had one sore, it provided me a glimpse of the far more loathsome and painful sores mentioned in Revelation 16:2. Can you imagine having many such sores on your body? You would not even be able to walk, sit or lay down.

Revelation 14:9-11 strongly warns about the eternal consequences:

Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

I used to wonder why God's judgment will be so severe and irrevocable for someone merely taking a mark on their hand or forehead. Obviously, there must be more to the mark than just an identification symbol or mode of e-commerce for a world society. On the surface, I think their philosophy will be that, if you are a good citizen of the world and want global peace and prosperity, then you will identify with it by taking this mark. In order to provide safety and security or to avert a potential economic catastrophe, a universal identification system will be imposed. As noted previously, many will take it for the sole purpose of

financial security, reasoning that they have to provide for themselves and their families in order to survive, rejecting the Lord's offer of salvation as the rich young ruler did in Luke 18:18-24.

I am convinced, however, that the brief glimpse Scripture gives concerning this mark reveals that there is much more to it. It is implemented by the False Prophet who will be instrumental in establishing a universal religion, who is given power to give breath to the image of the Antichrist and who forces everyone to worship the Antichrist and his image and to take the mark of the beast. I believe that to take this mark will, in reality, be a renunciation of faith in the Jesus Christ of the Bible, an acceptance of the counterfeit messiah and an initiation into the very religion and worldwide rule of the Antichrist and the Dragon (Satan).

Those who take the mark of the beast may have convenience initially and preserve their life temporarily, but they will pay a far greater price later when God's wrath and judgment are meted out on a rebellious world and apostate church. The consequences for taking the mark of the beast will prove to be a fatal mistake spiritually that will cost them for all eternity—far exceeding the temporary price of enduring persecution and martyrdom for refusing to take it.

## Victorious Over the Beast and His Image

The following two verses reveal that there will be many who are victorious over the Antichrist while refusing to take his mark or to worship his image:

And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name (Revelation 15:2).

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4).

# Mystery Babylon and the Apostate Church

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The unveiling of the apostate church of Revelation 17 and 18 is on the near horizon. “BABYLON THE GREAT” is a mystery that will be revealed in the end times as an ecumenical amalgamation of the universal apostate church, false religion and New Age spirituality. Today’s generation strongly echoes ancient Babylon, known for its sorcery (both occult and drug use), idolatry, pride, rebellion and sexual immorality. We see a proliferation of occultism and sorcery that is infiltrating every aspect of society: education, science, environmentalism, medicine, health, psychology, politics and religion in virtually every nation of the world. Revelation 17:1-6 foretells:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality. And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.

John refers to Babylon as “the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Revelation 17:5). Dr. T.V. Oommen, a research scientist and biblical scholar originally from India, studied the history of idolatry. During one of our many conversations, he shared his findings that Hinduism and all forms of idolatry and occultism can trace their origin back to ancient Babylon and the Tower of Babel. From there, they spread throughout the world (Genesis 10:8-10, 11:1-9).

Founded by Nimrod, Babylon was the site of the first organized system of idolatrous religion exemplified in the Tower of Babel. It was there God confused

their language and scattered them over the face of the Earth. Throughout the Bible, Babylon is synonymous with idolatry, sorcery, sexual immorality, pride and rebellion against God.

In Revelation, Babylon is used to exemplify the religious system of the end times through which all nations will be made drunk with the wine of her immorality and sorcery (Revelation 14:8, 17:2, 18:3, 23). *Harlot* is a metaphor for religious apostasy and idolatry. This “great harlot” (Revelation 17:1) of the end times, consisting of all false religions including apostate Christianity, will be a powerful universal system. This *apostate church* will be politically influential, materially rich and will intoxicate the leaders and inhabitants of the Earth with her abominable and blasphemous teachings and practices of her spiritual adultery (Revelation 17:1-5, 15, 18:3).

Revelation 17 and 18 indicate there is going to be an *unholy marriage* between religion and politics. The “many waters” on which the great harlot sits is identified as “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues [languages].” Her association with the kings of the Earth reveals the scope of her influence. That this woman sits on the beast indicates the Antichrist will initially support her. The apostate church will use her religious power to temporarily influence the Antichrist, as well as be responsible for the death of God’s true saints. She will cooperate with the False Prophet who forces the masses to receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead and to worship the Antichrist and his image.

The church’s hasty departure from the Word of God has resulted in a loss of fear and respect for the Lord. Her lack of discernment has led to participation in behavior and phenomena which are occultic and demonic in nature and a stench in God’s nostrils. This unrepentant apostate church will flourish and prosper—for a while—but God will certainly judge her.

This spiritual prostitute will wield great governmental clout, limitless prosperity and unbounded perversion. In an alliance with the Antichrist, this apostate church will persecute and martyr anyone who is faithful to God. Ironically, however, the Antichrist will throw his former ally, the apostate church, off of his back and unleash horrible devastation on her.

Although the apostate church helps catapult the Antichrist into power and to religiously unify his global kingdom, he will hate this materially wealthy, morally corrupt and politically influential apostate church. He will later bring her to a sudden end (Revelation 18:8) because he “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Desiring only himself to be worshiped, he will seek to destroy anything that even remotely resembles Christianity. The apostate church’s destruction most likely occurs after the Antichrist desecrates the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem and proclaims himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

## Destruction of Babylon

In spite of her confidence and sorceries, Babylon’s doom and fall is assured:

But evil will come on you which you will not know how to charm away; and disaster will fall on you for which you cannot atone; and destruction about which you do not know will come on you suddenly. Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there will be no coal to warm by nor a fire to sit before!” (Isaiah 47:11-14).

The Antichrist not only breaks his covenant with Israel, but he also breaks his relationship with the great prostitute, the apostate church. After using the apostate church to catapult himself to power, the Antichrist will turn on this lukewarm, backslidden church, and persecute, torture and destroy her. This is the frightful (but just) end of an apostate church which committed spiritual adultery and intoxicated the inhabitants of the earth with the wine of her adulteries (Revelation 17:2, 18:3).

The end of the once wealthy, powerful and unified apostate church is proclaimed:

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality (Revelation 14:8).

God has “judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER” (Revelation 19:2). Revelation 17:16-17 gives us the following account of how the apostate church will be destroyed:

And the ten horns [leaders of the Antichrist’s regime] which you saw, and the beast [Antichrist], these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

Additional insight is provided in Revelation 18:1-8:

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is

Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’ For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.”

The church, designed to be the bride of Christ and a light and evangel to the world, has become a spiritual prostitute, involved in every loathsome practice imaginable, being “drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” (Revelation 17:6). In the Old Testament, “If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire” (Leviticus 21:9 NIV). So too, this spiritual prostitute who infects and influences the world with her immorality and sorceries will be burned with fire (Revelation 17:16, 18:8-9).

Soon after the destruction of Babylon (Revelation 18:8-9), the Antichrist, False Prophet and the kings of the Earth and their armies will meet their end at Armageddon during Christ’s Second Coming (Revelation 16:14, 16, 17:12-14, 19:11-21). In contrast, true believers—those committed to the testimony of Jesus and obedient to the Word of God—will rule and reign with Christ during the Millennium and throughout eternity (Revelation 2:26, 3:21, 5:1, 20:4, 6, 22:5). God’s faithful followers will inherit all He has prepared for those who overcome (Revelation 21:7).

## Babylon or the New Jerusalem?

Sad, indeed, is the fact that New Age spirituality, which is helping to usher in what will become the religion of the Antichrist, is being assimilated into the beliefs and practices of many professing Christians. As a result, many supposed believers in Christ have little resemblance to biblical Christianity but have, instead, gravitated too close for comfort to the religion of Babylon.

In these last days, you will either be aligned with the people and city of Babylon, thereby guilty of being drunk with the blood of the saints (Revelation 17:6), or you will be identified with the true people of God and the coming New Jerusalem by having been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14).

You must ask yourself some soul-searching questions: Am I aligned with the apostate church, or am I part of the bride of Christ? Am I living for Babylon or longing for the New Jerusalem? Am I a lukewarm believer associated with false spirituality, or do I maintain a testimony for Jesus and the Word of God?

If you are not living for Christ now, then ask yourself one more critical question: Will I heed God's warning? "Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not perish in her punishment, for this is the LORD's time of vengeance; He is going to repay to her what she deserves" (Jeremiah 51:6). Before Babylon and the apostate church are destroyed during the Tribulation, God gives one final call for believers to separate from the world and false religion (Revelation 18:4).

The day and age in which we live is not a time to be a part of the "new morality" which calls good, evil and evil, good. Nor is this a time to be indifferent, unprepared, pursuing worldly passions or participating in any form of Eastern mysticism and occultism. Instead, with both apostasy and deception repeatedly warned of throughout prophetic scripture, believers in Christ must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3).

# Israel in Prophecy

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Another strong prophetic indicator is the nation of Israel. Throughout history, tyrannical rulers and hostile nations have repeatedly persecuted or tried to annihilate the Jews. From their enslavement in Egypt to their oppression by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome and from Hitler's Third Reich and their "final solution" for the extermination of the Jewish people to this current time of surrounding nations calling for the destruction of Israel, God has miraculously preserved the Jewish people. "Let Israel now say, 'Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up; yet they have not prevailed against me'" (Psalm 129:1-2). The protection and preservation of the Jewish people are *proof* that God's Word is sure. God has decreed that, to destroy Israel, one must first cause the fixed order of the sun, moon and stars to cease (Jeremiah 31:35-36). As long as these heavenly bodies endure, so will Israel.

For 2,500 years, there had been no independent nation of Israel (except for a few generations of liberty won by the heroic Maccabees). The ten tribes of Israel, considered the northern kingdom, were exiled to Assyria in 722 BC and never returned as a nation. The remaining two tribes, considered the southern kingdom of Judah, went into Babylonian captivity in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Following a decree by Cyrus (536 BC) and in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy, a small percentage of the captives returned to the land and rebuilt the Temple (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2; Jeremiah 29:10). They were initially under Persian rule and later under the control of other foreign nations.

A major scattering of Jews took place with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the defeat at Masada in AD 73. Many Jews fled Jerusalem at that time, and later in AD 135, when another Jewish revolt was crushed by the Romans. This is all part of the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 23:37-38:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

A small percentage of the Jewish people remained in the land under various foreign rulers, but most of the Jews were scattered throughout the world. Yet, the prophetic scriptures promised a regathering and restoration of the Jewish people, and prophets foretold that many events in the last days would

focus in and around the tiny nation of Israel.

A book entitled *Are You Ready for the End of Time?* was written by J. C. Ryle in 1867—almost a century before Israel was restored as a nation. On page 103 of his book, Ryle wrote: “However great the difficulties surrounding many parts of unfulfilled prophecy, two points appear to my own mind to stand out as plainly as if written by a sunbeam. One of these points is the second personal advent of our Lord Jesus Christ before the Millennium. The other of these points, is the future literal gathering of the Jewish nation and their restoration to their own land.”

After nearly 1,900 years of worldwide dispersion, Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948. Modern day Israel is a miracle! Before that time, anyone believing the Scriptures concerning the restoration of the nation of Israel was laughed at and considered a “dreamer.”

As stated previously, probably the most significant and miraculous world-changing development of the 20th century occurred in 1948 with the rebirth of the nation of Israel. Yet, the Muslim extremists have one goal: the destruction of Israel and of America. Antisemitism will draw a growing number of Jews still dwelling throughout the world back to their homeland for God’s end-time scenario and dealings with Israel.

Hamas’ brutal attack of Israel on October 7, 2023 is a foreshadowing of what the Jewish prophet Zechariah foretells will occur before the Messiah comes to deliver Israel from utter destruction (Zechariah 14:2). As atrocious as Hamas’ rampage of murder, torture, rape, mutilation, burning people alive and kidnapping, it was what I call a “microcosm” of a coming “macrocosm.”

## Israel’s Amazing Survival

During my Holy Land Adventures, I usually take groups to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. One of the Muslim officials there told me that the Muslim world is going to unite, eradicate Israel and push her into the sea. I asked, “When will that happen?” He said, “Very soon. When the time is right, we will unite. Israel will be forced to give us back Jerusalem, and we will get control of the West Bank and the Golan Heights.” I have been to the Golan Heights; it overlooks the Galilee area. With Syria in control of the Golan Heights, Israel can be easily attacked, and, without the West Bank, Israel would be hemmed in.

The nation’s survival since May 14, 1948, has been truly amazing. On May 15, 1948, armies from neighboring Arab nations fought against Israeli Defense Forces. Israel—only one day old at the time—repelled the attack and captured Arab territory; however, Jordan still controlled East Jerusalem.

As a result of the Six-Day War (June 5-10, 1967), the greatly outnumbered Israelis gained possession of the city of Jerusalem. The Jews had been threatened with extermination by a combination of the surrounding Arab nations. In the ensuing conflict, Israel acquired Sinai, East Jerusalem and West Jordan. Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the Western Wall were returned to Jewish control on June 7, 1967.

During my many trips to Israel, various people have shared some of the miraculous occurrences which enabled them to survive, even when the odds were heavily against them. Some said, “We don’t believe in Jesus as the Messiah. We don’t even know if we believe in God, but what’s happening over here—the way we have won battles and been protected—is almost like Bible days with David against Goliath.” And, they are right. God has a purpose in the events taking place there.

## Rebuilding of the Temple

Before 1948, there was no nation of Israel. Today, it exists. Although the Temple has not yet been rebuilt in Jerusalem, I am convinced it will be in our lifetime—sooner than many may think. As far back as 1984, when I was first in Israel, I discovered there were definite plans (kept relatively secret then because they didn’t want to cause a conflict with the Arab nations) to rebuild the Temple. Having been there many times since, I have seen these plans move to the forefront.

Archaeological excavations have been conducted by the Department of Antiquities of Hebrew University for some years. Archaeological explorations have been done beneath the Temple Mount. Measurements have also been made of the Temple Mount, with the focus of rebuilding the Temple.

I have spent several days in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem attending lectures, researching and interacting with rabbis and others. Although much of the world is radically opposed to Israel’s claims in Jerusalem and their contested ownership of the Temple Mount (Islamic authorities deny that a Jewish Temple ever existed at the site), I have noticed an increasing progression toward the eventual rebuilding of the Temple as prophesied in Scripture.

The Temple Institute is in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem. I usually take my groups there to see a presentation concerning plans to rebuild the Temple. Displays of instruments, utensils and fixtures—allegedly exact replicas of the originals—are ready to be used in the future Temple. Their efforts include producing all the ritual vessels necessary for the function of the Temple and identifying and training priests from the line of Levi with the hope to resume animal sacrifices and priestly offerings once the Temple is rebuilt.

There is heightened hope that an unblemished red heifer has finally been located. The ashes of a red heifer, mixed with water, are necessary for ceremonial cleansing and purification rites (Numbers 19). Many religious Jews consider the appearance of a red heifer as an indicator of the coming of the Messiah and the construction of the third Temple.

Orthodox Jews are at the forefront of efforts to construct the third Temple in Jerusalem as they await their promised Messiah and the return of the Shekinah (Divine Presence) appearing in the Temple. Some Orthodox Jews, committed to reestablishing the Temple, believe that both the present problems of the world and the problems faced by the Jewish people will be solved only by rebuilding.

Without a doubt, there is a growing desire to rebuild the Temple on the

Temple Mount in Jerusalem and restore the ritual sacrifices. Increasingly, more Jews are longing for the Messiah to rebuild the Temple and restore the Davidic kingdom to its former power and glory. They await the Messiah to come and usher in the Messianic kingdom wherein the dead will be resurrected, death and disease will be eradicated, the Millennial Temple will be rebuilt, Judah and Israel will be reunited, there will be universal peace and prosperity (even the animals will live in peace and harmony), the whole Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and the Torah and the commandments will be obeyed.

In 2002, I attended a banquet in La Jolla, California for hundreds of pastors and Christian leaders to hear the Mayor of Jerusalem (later to become Israel's Prime Minister). Ehud Olmert stated that the heart of the Jewish people is Jerusalem, and the heart of Jerusalem is the Temple. He was adamant that the Temple must be rebuilt.

An Orthodox Jewish rabbi told me that he was not sure when the Temple would be rebuilt but felt it would be in the foreseeable future. I asked him, "What will you do with the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque?" His position was this: "When the time is right, the Muslims will let us dismantle the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque."

Another view that is held regarding the rebuilding of the Temple is that the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are not located on the actual site of the former Temple. Many believe the Jewish Temple, Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque could coexist on the Temple Mount with Jerusalem becoming the religious capital of the world. Many Israeli leaders want the rebuilt Temple to serve as a House of Prayer for peoples of all nations and all faiths.

Others believe there could be another invasion of Israel by Arab nations and part of Israel's prize could be the rebuilding of their Temple. A rocket shot from the Gaza Strip could mistakenly hit the Temple Mount, or a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, could level the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque and make way for the rebuilding of the Temple. Many believe that part of the Antichrist's peace treaty with Israel will be the rebuilding of the Temple.

However it may occur, be assured that the Temple will be rebuilt. Also, you can be certain that the Antichrist will desecrate it.

## Israel's Treaty with Death

It has been said that there will be no peace in the world without peace in the Middle East and no peace in the Middle East without peace between Israel and Palestine. While many U.S. presidents and other world leaders have tried and failed thus far, there is someone coming (none other than the Antichrist) who will succeed in signing a seven-year peace treaty with Israel. The Jews—and the world—will believe he is the "messiah" and "savior" who is ushering in global peace and prosperity.

While on the Golan Heights, a strategic military position that the Israelis have repeatedly been asked to give up, I suggested to our Jewish guide (Mickey) who is a believer in Yeshua (Jesus) that giving this favorable location up would

make Israel vulnerable to attack, so how could the Israeli government even consider doing this. He agreed, but I can still envision him in the twilight of the evening, shivering in 30 degree wind-induced temperatures with a somber look on his face saying, "We're tired. We want peace."

I asked other Israelis in Jerusalem and elsewhere, "How much land are you willing to give away for peace—Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, West Bank, East Jerusalem?" They all said pretty much the same thing: "We are tired of dying and watching our children die. We will do almost anything for peace." Many are ready and willing to accept what the New Testament identifies as the Antichrist, believing him to be the Messiah because he will sign a peace treaty and help them build the third Temple.

At the start of the 70th week foretold by Daniel, Israel will sign a seven-year peace treaty with the leader of the revived Roman Empire in the hope of providing security from Israel's enemies. Instead of being a treaty of peace and life as the Israeli leaders anticipate, it will degenerate into a treaty of persecution and death.

The first half of the Tribulation will be a period of peace for the Jews. The book of Daniel reveals that the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel to protect them, enabling them to rebuild their Temple. Many Jews with messianic expectations believe that two of the ways to identify the Messiah is for the Temple to be rebuilt and the sacrificial system to be reinstated.

Religious Jews believe that a descendant of David will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. One of the principles of Jewish faith enumerated by Maimonides, the greatest Jewish philosopher of the medieval period, is that one day there will arise a dynamic Jewish leader, a direct descendant of the Davidic dynasty, who will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and gather Jews from all over the world and bring them back to the Land of Israel. All the nations of the world will recognize Moshiach ("the anointed one") to be a global leader and will accept his dominion. However, prophetic scripture warns us that before the true Messiah comes, a false messiah, better known as the Antichrist, will appear on the world scene to deceive the Jews and the Gentile nations.

Antichrist will be happy to accommodate Israel's passion to rebuild her long anticipated Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. He will do so in an attempt to fulfill Zechariah 6:12-13 which indicates that the Messiah will build the Temple. However, before the true Messiah returns and builds the actual Millennial Temple, a false Messiah (Antichrist) will build the "Tribulation Temple." The Jews will rejoice as their beloved Temple is dedicated and animal sacrifices resume. Antichrist may even set up his global headquarters in Jerusalem in an effort to fulfill the biblical prophecies of Jesus Christ reigning from Jerusalem during His Millennial Kingdom.

Elated Jews will believe the Antichrist to be the Messiah, but what they think to be the Millennium will turn out to be their "Great Tribulation." It will be the darkest hour in Israel's history. Israel's short-lived tranquility will end abruptly at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation when the Antichrist declares himself to be God (possibly during the dedication of the Temple). The

Jews will revolt and reject him, so the Antichrist will seek to destroy them.

The Antichrist, who promises peace and safety for Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation period (Daniel's 70th week—Daniel 9:24-27), will, by the middle of it, break his covenant with her. The second half of the Tribulation will be the greatest holocaust in Israel's history (Matthew 24:15-21; Mark 13:19-20). It will be a time of great travail for the Jews—as Jeremiah described it, “Woe, for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's [Israel's] distress, yet he will be saved from it” (Jeremiah 30:7). Daniel called it “a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time” (Daniel 12:1). Jesus referred to it as “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). He said, “For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days” (Mark 13:19-20).

The Antichrist will try to annihilate the Jewish people and everyone who holds to the testimony of Jesus (Yeshua). God will allow the Jewish people to go through an unparalleled period of tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30), during which two-thirds of the Jews will perish (Zechariah 13:8-9). One of the results will be to soften the hearts of a remnant, so they will accept Jesus as their Messiah.

“It will come about in all the land,” declares the LORD, “that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ And they will say, ‘The LORD is my God’” (Zechariah 13:8-9).

Through this great tribulation, Israel will come to recognize Yeshua as the true Messiah. The greatest revival in the history of the world will happen as multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles accept Yeshua as their Messiah.

## Abomination of Desolation—Desecration of the Temple

At the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation period, the Antichrist will desecrate the Temple, proclaiming himself to be God. The False Prophet will place an image of the Antichrist in the Temple and command individuals to worship it. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 24:15 as “the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.” Paul mentions in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that the Antichrist “takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” John, in Revelation 13:14-15, reveals that an image set up in honor of the Antichrist will be given breath “so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

Many Jews will be deceived into believing that the Antichrist is their Messiah; however, when he desecrates the Temple and demands worship, they

will then know he is an impostor. Then, the Antichrist will initiate the worst persecution of the Jews in the history of the world. Matthew 24:15-22 warns:

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet [Daniel 9:27, 12:11], standing in the holy place—let the reader understand—then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house. And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days! Moreover, pray that when you flee, it will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again. And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

A remnant of the Jews will flee into the wilderness where they will be supernaturally protected by the Lord (Revelation 12:14).

## The Mount of Olives and the Golden Gate

On the slopes of the Mount of Olives is the most sacred—and largest—Jewish cemetery in the world with an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 tombs. The bodies on the Mount of Olives are buried with their feet toward the Temple Mount, so when Messiah comes and raises the dead, they can walk with Him through the Golden Gate and straight ahead to the Temple. Jewish writing (Midrash) states that the resurrection of the dead will begin on the Mount of Olives. The Messiah and the risen dead will cross the Kidron Valley, through the Golden Gate then to the Temple Mount.

On the eastern side of the Old City of Jerusalem walls, the Golden (Eastern) Gate stands bricked shut since the Middle Ages. It faces the Mount of Olives and allows the most direct access to the Temple Mount. It is believed that the reason Muslim Suleiman, a sultan of the Ottoman Empire, sealed the Golden Gate was to prevent the return of the Jewish Messiah through it as foretold in the Hebrew Bible. Jewish literature indicates that when Messiah comes, He will enter Jerusalem through the Golden or Eastern Gate.

In front of the Golden Gate lies a Muslim cemetery—an attempt to “defile” and “prevent” the Jewish Messiah (the promised Deliverer) from entering through that gate in fulfillment of perceived messianic prophecy. However, one day, Jesus Christ *will* stand on the Mount of Olives, walk through the Golden Gate and bring everlasting peace to both Jew and Arab and all who receive Him as Savior and Lord. The glory of the Lord will fill the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 43).

## Rejecting the True Messiah

The Jews rejected their true Messiah, but the Bible says they will temporarily accept a counterfeit. Jesus states in John 5:43:

I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

Daniel 12:1-3 foretells:

Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

We get a glimpse of how great this deception will be when we look at Malachi 4:5-6, which states:

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.

When we look back at 1 Kings 18:38, we see that the fire of the Lord fell and consumed Elijah's sacrifice. We also discover in the first chapter of 2 Kings that on two occasions Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume a captain and his company of 50 men. Fire also came out from the presence of the Lord to consume the burnt offering as Moses and Aaron stood before the tent of meeting (Leviticus 9:23-24). How easy it will be for the Jews to be deceived into thinking the False Prophet, who "makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (Revelation 13:13), is Elijah who is expected to come before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.

The Tribulation will be a confusing time for those without Bible knowledge and discernment. The potential for deception grows even greater. There are many Jewish views of the nature and mission of the Messiah. One of these views, I feel, adds significance to our study. Some rabbinical scholars believe that two Messiahs will appear—one after the other. One will be named Messiah ben (son of) Joseph and the other Messiah ben (son of) David. Messiah ben Joseph dies leading wars against Gog and Magog, and his body is left on the streets of

Jerusalem for 40 days. Jewish legend indicates that Messiah ben David appears and resuscitates Messiah ben Joseph. This Messiah ben David will go on to have victory over the armies of Gog and Magog.

Let's consider this particular Jewish perspective on the Messiah in light of biblical prophecy. Think about what is going to happen when the Antichrist appears. Revelation 13:3 mentions a fatal wound and the world's astonishment at the miraculous recovery of the Antichrist. Revelation 13:11 brings the False Prophet onto the scene who performs great signs and makes those who dwell on the earth to worship the Antichrist whose fatal wound was healed. The Bible indicates that the Temple in Jerusalem is to be rebuilt and the Antichrist is sure to win the favor of the Jews by having a crucial part in this. He will usher in a seven-year peace treaty allowing Jerusalem to become his world capital of religion. Many Jewish people will be deceived and accept this Antichrist as their Messiah partly because what is happening fits in with Messianic views already in place in Jewish writings.

Through counterfeit miracles and strong delusion, the Antichrist will be temporarily honored as the promised Messiah, the Savior of the World. Revelation 11:8 refers to Jerusalem as "Sodom and Egypt" since it will be filled with immorality and sorcery due to the Antichrist's regime.

Although Israel as a nation has rejected Jesus as the Messiah, there has always been a *remnant* who believe in Him. Revelation 7 indicates that, during the Tribulation, 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel will be redeemed. It appears from the context that these Jewish believers will preach the Gospel of Yeshua (Jesus) throughout the world during the Tribulation period, bringing many people to salvation.

So, what is the resolution of this dilemma concerning Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David? The resolution is that Messiah comes twice. The first time was to fulfill such prophecies as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 regarding the suffering servant who was to be rejected and despised and die as a sacrifice—the perfect lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Messiah's Second Coming will fulfill the remaining prophecies and promises in the Hebrew Bible. He will set up His earthly Millennial Kingdom in Jerusalem and reign on David's throne.

## The Deliverer Will Come

As prophesied in Scripture thousands of years ago, one day, all the nations of the Earth will be gathered against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:3). A multinational force representing a global society will fight against Jerusalem: "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:2).

Just when it appears that all is lost, the Deliverer, the Messiah of Israel, will return from Heaven with the saints of God and overthrow the enemies of Israel:

Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives [remember Acts 1:11-12], which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! (Zechariah 14:3-5).

The prophet Joel adds some additional insight concerning the Lord's deliverance:

The LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more. And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; and a spring will go out from the house of the LORD to water the valley of Shittim (Joel 3:16-18).

## Jewish People Mourn

When Yeshua (Jesus) returns to save the Jews at Armageddon, they will mourn because they will realize that they had rejected their true Messiah. Their prophet Zechariah accurately prophesied:

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn (Zechariah 12:10).

Matthew 24:30 states:

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7 foretells:

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

The final question Jesus answers before His ascension, as recorded in Acts 1:6-7, implies that at some future date He will restore the kingdom to Israel:

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

Peter speaks to the Jews in Acts 3:17-21:

And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

There will be a scattering of the Jewish people in the middle of the Tribulation period when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple. The final gathering will be when Messiah Yeshua returns to establish His Kingdom. Mark 13:26-27 tells us:

Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 23:39 will be fulfilled:

For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'

Unbelief

Unbelief has caused many theologians and scholars throughout history to be convinced that the Church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people and to allegorize the Second Coming of Christ. Circumstances seemed hopeless for a literal fulfillment: Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, the Jews were dispersed to the nations of the world and Israel had become a wasteland. Restoration seemed utterly improbable and absolutely impossible. Besides, Jesus had not come back as expected; therefore, the prophecies and promises to Israel *must be* spiritually applied to the Church. They didn't believe the integrity of God's Word or His power to fulfill what He clearly foretells and promises. Their unbelief led to erroneous biblical interpretations in light of Israel's restoration as a nation and the "signs of the times" happening before their very eyes. They became impatient and accepted alternative views, just as Abraham accepted Hagar, with the resulting conflict in the Body of Christ similar to that of the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac.

It is that same unbelief and blinded eyes that has caused many Jews to reject their Messiah, but God always has His remnant. The Apostle Paul states regarding the Jews:

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS" (Romans 11:25-27).

## Millennial Promises Fulfilled

Prophetic scripture discloses that when Yeshua Hamashiach (Jesus the Messiah) returns at His Second Coming, He will usher in world peace. Wars and famine will cease. The Old Testament saints and those martyred during the Tribulation will be resurrected and enter the Millennial Kingdom. Everyone will worship the one true God. The Torah (Law) will go forth from Jerusalem to all the world.

Biblical prophecies and promises scattered throughout the Bible regarding Israel that have not yet come to pass will be fulfilled at Christ's Second Coming and during His Millennial reign. Following Armageddon, Jesus Christ's Millennial reign will commence with Jerusalem as His world capitol. All of the prophecies and promises in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) concerning the restoration and blessings of Israel and Jerusalem will be fulfilled during the Millennium. Let's consider some of them.

Messiah Yeshua will establish His Kingdom and rule in righteousness, peace and joy. There will be universal peace under the reign of the Prince of Peace (Micah 4:3). He will judge the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat near

Jerusalem (Joel 3:2; Matthew 25:31-46). Jerusalem will be His capital (Psalm 2:6-9; Isaiah 2:2-4, 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5; Micah 4:1, 7; Luke 1:30-33). Hostilities between Israel, Egypt and Assyria will be replaced with friendship because of their common faith in the Messiah (Isaiah 19:23-25).

The dead will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2). The graves of the house of Israel will be opened and God's people will come up out of their graves (Ezekiel 37:12). The promises concerning Israel's possession of the Promised Land will be fulfilled (Genesis 15:18, 35:12, 48:3-4; Isaiah 1:26; Micah 4:4).

The Millennial Temple of Ezekiel's prophetic vision will be built and the glory of the Lord will fill it (Ezekiel 43:1-5). The whole Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9). The Lord will be king over all the Earth (Zechariah 14:9).

The messianic age will be a time of peace and prosperity for Israel and the world:

Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war (Isaiah 2:2-4).

And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree [satisfied in every way with peace and prosperity], with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken (Micah 4:3-4).

The wolf will dwell with the lamb. Animals will live in peace and harmony with each other. Predatory and venomous creatures will no longer be a danger to humans:

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat

straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Your heart will thrill and rejoice:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you....Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising....Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you....Foreigners will build up your walls, and their kings will minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, and in My favor I have had compassion on you. Your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.....The sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, and all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; and they will call you the city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel....I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation....Violence will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders; but you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise. No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory. Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon wane; for you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over (Isaiah 60:1-20).

No voice of weeping and the sound of crying:

I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed. They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build and another inhabit, they will not plant and another eat; for as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, and My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they

are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, and their descendants with them. It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD (Isaiah 65:19-25).

God will put His law within them and on their heart:

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Ten men from all of the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zechariah 8:23).

Jerusalem will dwell in security:

People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Zechariah 14:11, 16).

The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem:

Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths."

For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Micah 4:2).

# Coming Persecution

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It should be of no surprise that believers in Christ will experience some trouble and suffering since we live in a fallen world that is in rebellion against God. Jesus told His disciples, “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The Apostle Paul said, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).

While believers in Christ are free from God’s coming wrath (John 5:24; Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9) and judgment during the Tribulation as well as eternal separation from God, we are not guaranteed freedom from persecution.

People in many countries are suffering persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ. They tell of being mocked, ridiculed, slandered, attacked, raped, tortured, fired from jobs, loss of business, imprisoned, homes destroyed, churches burned, children and spouses abducted and family or church members martyred. Persecution will be worldwide for those who come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation period.

## New World Order

If there is going to be a new world order and a global society under the reign of the Antichrist, then those who will not cooperate must either be converted, silenced or eliminated. As the current “love and unity movement” of tolerance and acceptance for all continues its *deceptive* influence throughout the world, those involved who initially proclaimed tolerance and acceptance for all religions are becoming increasingly intolerant of one: biblical Christianity. It is obvious that those who remain faithful to the Word of God and their testimony for Jesus will suffer persecution. It has occurred throughout history in nations around the world, and, now, a dark shadow of persecution is starting to spread across the United States.

Since the 1980s (when persecution of Christians seemed inconceivable in the United States because the Moral Majority was dominant between 1979–1989), I have endeavored to prepare the body of Christ through written and spoken messages about an unprecedented wave of persecution coming to the U.S. and intensifying in virtually every part of the world. Those who maintain a testimony that Jesus is the only way of salvation and who refuse to compromise their moral convictions based upon Scripture are facing increasing opposition and hostility.

Committed Christians in the U.S. today are becoming like the Jews in Nazi Germany shortly before the “night of broken glass”—the only difference is we have nowhere to escape as changing laws are creating an environment for persecution that will eventually envelop the entire world. But, as the Lord spoke to my heart while writing this very chapter, *morning* is coming after these dark *nights*.

## Why Persecution?

Why such enmity for the name of Jesus Christ and animosity toward the Bible? The following are a few reasons why vicious persecution will prevail for a season on the world scene:

1. People are desensitized to violence. Young people and adults are exposed to so much violence through the media that they are no longer shocked by it but accept it as a normal part of life.
2. Biblical beliefs are being undermined. From secular scientists and much of the media expounding erroneous theories of evolution as factual, many liberal theologians and lukewarm pastors are undermining biblical truth. They are denying the accuracy and authority of Scripture, contradicting the creation account in Genesis, rejecting Jesus as the only way of salvation, discounting His resurrection, ridiculing the rapture and Second Coming and doing away with the biblical concept of hell. They resort to “human wisdom” (e.g. a loving God would not send anyone to hell) in an attempt to refute biblical truth. They distort, twist and falsify Scripture (e.g. everyone goes to Heaven).
3. The Bible offends. Scripture is offensive to those who do not want to acknowledge a Creator and a God they will one day give an account to. The Bible exposes sin and confronts the lifestyles of the godless, thereby angering those who do not want to live by its moral standards. Fear and respect for God and His Word has been replaced with indifference and disdain.
4. Biblical Christians and Jews are being labeled as the world’s troublemakers. An expert on the Holocaust was asked during a television interview how such an atrocity could occur and how so many people could quietly sit by while millions of Jews were annihilated. He responded that, for years before the atrocities began, the Jews were subtly degraded and put down through Nazi propaganda; they were labeled as troublemakers and regarded to be subhuman. The Germans were gradually programmed through the media so that, when the cruelties and exterminations occurred, most people tolerated it with little concern. This same kind of conditioning is happening today through the media against conservative Christians.
5. Love and unity are considered the ultimate good; division is evil. Christians who refuse to unite for the common good and salvation of our planet and humankind are considered judgmental, divisive, evil and are the real antichrists. Moral standards in Scripture are considered repressive and oppressive. Converting someone from another faith is labeled a hate crime and denies the legitimacy of their cultural heritage.

Our nation and world is becoming more pluralistic and progressing toward the commonality and unifying of all religions. Consequently, the belief that Jesus is the only way is considered alienating, schismatic, dogmatic, old-fashioned, breeding hatred and obstructing the cooperation that is imperative of people who are working for a common global good. Basically, their rationale is: "Since all religions believe in God or some Supreme Being, we must forget doctrinal issues and unite for the common good of the planet." While I am all for uniting for the common good, I cannot do so by denying my faith or compromising my convictions.

Under false pretense, committed Christians will be persecuted by those professing to be the true church. The scriptural criteria for being a Christian is being replaced with a new definition of spirituality put forth by those who oppose genuine believers in Christ and seek to destroy any who disagree. Lukewarm and apostate Christians will be some of those leading the persecution against God's people. No one is more vehement against the truth than those who have become unfaithful to the Lord.

6. Satanic and demonic influence will proliferate. There is no doubt from Scripture that world leaders and others will come under strong satanic and demonic influence. Their hatred and rage against God and His people will lead to such confusion and delusion that horrendous hostility, coupled with an insatiable desire for death and destruction, will overwhelm this planet. The False Prophet will decree that no one will be able to buy or to sell without the mark of the beast, and he will cause all who refuse to worship the image of the Antichrist to be killed (Revelation 13:15, 17).

Satan knows his time is short. He is well aware of biblical prophecy and is escalating his targeting of Jews and believers in Jesus. Like an angry nest of yellow jackets, Satan is relentless in his aggressive attacks.

Scripture foretells that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). Demonic beings, as well as humans who do not want this to become a reality, are motivated to do everything possible to prevent it.

## The War on Christ

Today, there is a deliberate and intensifying war against Christ, in the U.S. and the world, being orchestrated by those who hate God and His Word and desire to eradicate every vestige of faith in Jesus Christ. Why? Who is motivating it? What are they doing? Where is it leading?

Virtually everything that has to do with the Bible is being ridiculed and pushed out of our society and many churches. Almost anything contrary to God's nature and Scripture is being welcomed and embraced. Instead of learning what pleases the Lord, today's generation dishonors Him and flaunts every imaginable behavior that is disgraceful in His eyes. Idolatrous and immoral practices are becoming the norm.

Anti-Christian propaganda by moguls who control the media are igniting

the flames of hostility against those who do not accept, endorse, celebrate and practice their depraved morality. Oppression, harassment and persecution are on the rise in the United States and the world as the attacks (in many forms and from various sources) increase. Removal of crosses and the Ten Commandments from public places is becoming the norm. Laws are being passed to limit what pastors and Christians can do or say in an effort to intimidate the church into silence concerning biblical truth and sin. Persecution of believers in Jesus is intensifying worldwide with a premeditated global goal to systematically purge the Earth of biblical beliefs and followers of Jesus Christ: attacks on social media, threats of violence, arrests, fines, resettlement, confiscation of property, vandalism of churches, imprisonment, forced labor, servitude, sexual slavery, torture, mutilation, execution and martyrdom are being faced by growing numbers of Christians. The oppressors may be brave and bold when they persecute those who believe in Jesus, but they will not be so brave and bold when they face the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16-17). The winds of persecution are blowing across America and the world because of increasing hostility toward the God of the Bible and His moral standards.

## Prosperity or Persecution

Both prosperity and persecution are ahead. Exorbitant prosperity will be lavished on the apostate church during the first half of the seven-year Tribulation while extreme persecution will confront God's faithful remnant—often at the hands of a godless apostate church. However, it will only last a few years, and the fate of the apostate church and that of true believers will be entirely different.

During the latter part of the Tribulation, the joy and prosperity of a rebellious world will turn to despair as the trumpet and bowl judgments are unleashed. One example is Revelation 16:5-6:

And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

Although lukewarm and apostate Christians will at first be tolerated for their conformity to the world's culture, their time will come because, after they have been used to help catapult the Antichrist to power, he and his minions will turn on them with a vengeance in an attempt to destroy every vestige of Christianity—even a lukewarm, watered-down version. The unfaithful apostate church will meet a horrible fate during the second half of the seven-year Tribulation, but Christ's true followers will rule and reign with Him during the Millennium and throughout Eternity (Revelation 20:4).

When Christ defeats the Antichrist and the kings of the Earth at

Armageddon, with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers (Revelation 17:14). Faithful believers in Christ will be jubilantly welcomed to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. In contrast, unless the apostates repent and accept Jesus Christ during the Tribulation (which will probably result in their being martyred), they have a most fearful day of reckoning awaiting them at the Great White Throne Judgment.

## Spirit of Satan

Throughout Scripture, the “spirit of Satan” has inspired persecution of God’s people. It motivated Cain to kill his brother Abel. It used Jannes and Jambres (Pharaoh’s magicians) to oppose Moses. It opposed Elijah through a wicked queen and king and the prophets of Baal.

The “spirit of Satan” attempted to put to death Daniel’s three friends in a fiery furnace and Daniel himself in a lions’ den. The book of Esther makes known how it tried to annihilate the nation of Israel. It inspired the stoning of Stephen and motivated Herod to put James to death and then arrest Peter. It caused Antipas, God’s faithful witness, to be martyred. It encouraged the torture and murder of many prophets of God throughout history.

Satan himself entered Judas to betray Jesus. Satan will give his power, throne and great authority to the Antichrist. The “spirit of Satan” will inspire the greatest persecution in the history of the world during the Tribulation period when it will be universally popular to persecute and martyr those who bear witness of Jesus and the Word of God.

The true underlying motivation for persecuting Christians by both the secular world and the apostate church is the same reason the media enthusiastically touts aberrant and perverse behavior and lifestyles—open hostility toward God and His Word—inspired by the “spirit of Satan.”

## Pattern of Persecution in the New Testament

We see the following pattern of persecution in the New Testament:

1. In Acts 2:47, believers were “enjoying the favor of all the people.” But, the tide gradually turns as Jewish leaders become disturbed at the preaching of Jesus’ resurrection. They arrest Peter and John, warn them not to speak in Jesus’ name and then release them (Acts 4:1-22).
2. In Acts 5:17-42, Jewish leaders, who are inflamed with jealousy over the genuine miracles and the apostles’ refusal to quit preaching the resurrection of Jesus, arrest them again. This time, they are flogged before they are released.
3. Then, in Acts 7, Stephen is stoned and becomes the first martyr of the Church.
4. As a result of Stephen’s martyrdom, an explosion of persecution arose. Acts 8:1 says, “... on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and

Samaria, except the apostles.”

I believe a similar pattern of gradually increasing persecution on a global scale and then an explosion of martyrdom worldwide will occur. In the near future, it will please the people and be popular to persecute true believers in Christ, just as it was in New Testament times. They will kill Christians, believing they are serving God. Acts 12:1-3 states:

Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword. When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

## Word of God and Testimony of Jesus

The book of Revelation indicates five times that believers will be persecuted for two main things during the Tribulation: the Word of God and their testimony of Jesus. Is it worth noting that these are two of the main things under assault today? A movement of open aggression against the Bible and the name and testimony of Jesus grows globally—and we have not yet entered the Tribulation period. The Apostle John testified to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:2), and he was exiled to Patmos (1:9). Martyrs will be slain in the Tribulation period because of the Word of God and testimony they maintain (6:9). Satan will be enraged and make war with those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (12:17), and believers will be martyred during the Tribulation because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God (20:4).

It is also of interest to note that Scripture predicted, approximately 2,000 years ago that during the Tribulation period, believers would be hated and persecuted because of the name of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:9-10; Mark 13:12-13; and Luke 21:16-17).

## Wearing Out the Saints

Most people during the Tribulation will choose to follow the convenient way of compromise and conformity by submitting to Antichrist's regime. However, there will be those left behind after the rapture who will realize that the Bible is true and that they must refuse to take the mark of the Beast or to worship his image. They will endure great difficulty, suffer intense persecution and face probable martyrdom. A time of severe persecution will follow for those who refuse to bow the knee to Antichrist and take his mark. Revelation 13:5-7 states:

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and

blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the [Tribulation] saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

To “make war” does not mean to wage a military campaign but refers to hostility against, and seeking the destruction of, God’s people in whatever manner and through whatever means possible. “To overcome them” does not mean the subversion of their faith but to kill their physical bodies.

Daniel 7:21-27:

I kept looking, and that horn [Antichrist] was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. ... He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand [similar to how God gave Satan permission to afflict Job] for a time, times, and half a time. But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

Scripture assures us that God will bring ultimate victory for His people as He brings retribution on those who have persecuted them and destroys all enemies.

## Suffering of Believers During the Tribulation

Some think that the following verses mean that believers will be raptured before the Tribulation, while others say they refer to God’s wrath, which we will miss, but that we will face Satan’s persecution:

1 Thessalonians 1:10:

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Revelation 3:10:

Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

No matter what your belief is concerning the timing of the rapture, those who come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation will face Satan's persecution: hunger, thirst, exposure to the elements, scorching heat, unable to buy or sell, loss of home and even martyrdom.

Revelation 6:9-11:

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Revelation 7:9-10, 13-17:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands [palm branches are associated in Scripture with celebration, deliverance, and joy]; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 13:10:

If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone

kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

According to Revelation 14:13, death for believers during the Tribulation will actually be a blessing:

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

## Overcome by the Blood of the Lamb

Is the death of the martyrs and the blood of the saints a triumph for Satan and the Antichrist? To the contrary, it is a victory for faithful followers who confirm their loyalty to Jesus Christ by their witness even to death. It validates their testimony and will inspire others to come to the Lord.

Believers during the Tribulation will overcome the enemy through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. They will choose to suffer oppression, persecution and even martyrdom rather than deny their faith in Jesus Christ. Rather than indicating Satan's triumph, the blood of the martyrs will proclaim the victory of faithful followers who confirm their loyalty to Jesus by their witness even to death (Revelation 12:11).

## Persecution Purifies and Validates

This coming wave of global persecution will purify the lives of countless believers before the Bridegroom (Christ) comes for His Bride (the Church). By their changed lives and testimonies of the nearness of Christ's coming, these refined and zealous believers will have planted seeds of salvation in the hearts of those who will come to faith in Christ after the rapture. In fact, the long-awaited and most extraordinary revival in history will occur during the Tribulation period—in the midst of fierce persecution. In spite of the Gospel being suppressed and believers being oppressed, a great multitude from every nation on Earth will commit their lives to Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:9).

Persecution is allowed by God for the purpose of purifying His Church. The Church is infiltrated with beliefs and practices that rival the apostasy of ancient Israel and Judah. Many believers today are seduced by immoral activities. The illicit pleasures of this world will lose their appeal and seem unimportant when you, your family or fellow believers are suffering, being persecuted or martyred.

The psalmist writes: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes" (Psalm 119:67, 71).

The Apostle Peter comments: "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the

flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2).

Christ loves His Church and gave Himself for her to sanctify and cleanse her so “that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:27). Peter adds additional admonition regarding Jesus coming back for believers without spot or blemish: “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14).

What is the one priority every spouse wants of their mate? Faithfulness. That is what God wants of His bride, the body of Christ—for us to be faithful and to honor Him. The Apostle Paul said: “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” (2 Corinthians 11:2).

While we are saved by grace and have “become the righteousness of God” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21), God’s purpose is for us to live out what we profess and “keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3).

Why should we stay faithful to Christ and His Word and not live like most everybody else in this sin-infested world? There are four main reasons why I gave up the pleasures of my past which seemed so normal before I knew the Lord:

First, I became convinced there really is a God, and I had better fear (respect) and obey Him.

Second, God’s Word and Spirit revealed to me that certain behavior is contrary to His purpose for human beings and leads to destructive consequences—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Third, I knew that, at any moment, I could be standing before Him because of an unexpected accident, act of violence by someone else or the possibility of the rapture at any time. For others, imminent death from old age or disease causes many to stay close to the Lord and forsake sinful practices.

Fourth, I have confident assurance that Christ will come again and establish His eternal kingdom. Therefore, I am willing, by His grace, to give up anything now for the hope I have in Him.

## Four Questions

Let me ask you four important questions with eternal significance.

First, do you believe the Bible is God’s Word? You must be convinced it is, or you will not stand for it in the face of opposition. The choices and decisions you make now for the Lord and His Word—to affirm or deny—are moving you along a path that will determine where you will be and how you respond if, and when, you face hostility and persecution.

We must make a choice to stand for the Lord who will be proven to be ever faithful and to stand for His Word which will be demonstrated to be amazingly accurate.

Second, do you know God's Word? If you are not studying it, how will you know if current teachings are of God or part of the prophesied apostasy? You will be confused at a time when our Lord has warned believers to beware and be discerning.

Third, do you know Jesus? Have you developed a relationship with Him through prayer? Do you know His voice, so you will not follow an imitation or counterfeit?

Fourth, are you silenced as a witness because you are afraid of people's opinions and embarrassed to acknowledge Christ and His Word? Jesus said:

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).

Therefore everyone who confesses Me before people, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before people, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33).

## Should We Quit Witnessing?

In light of this intensifying war on Jesus Christ and multiplying hostility toward believers in His name, should we quit witnessing and stop doing evangelism? No way! We must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). We can pierce the darkness with the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Never before have we had such unique opportunities to share the hope of the Gospel with so many confused, disillusioned and fearful people. We must strive to proclaim the Good News accurately and boldly to this generation. Doing so enables us to participate in Jesus' final instructions to His disciples to be His witnesses "both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

As it becomes increasingly unpopular and potentially dangerous to be a witness for Christ, we must still unashamedly proclaim the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## Day of Decision

In the Tribulation period, people will face one of two things. Either they will face the spirit of Antichrist persecuting them and seeking their demise and destruction (but they can overcome through the blood of the Lamb), or, if they have denied Jesus Christ and conformed to the apostate world system, they will face the wrath of God poured out in full strength. And, at the end of the Millennium, they will be raised from the dead to stand before the terrifying Great

## White Throne Judgment.

Today is a day of decision. Your resolve must be made while you still have the opportunity. Circumstances could be such that you will never have another chance to decide what your choice will be. Hopefully, if you haven't already done so, you will choose to accept Jesus Christ right now.

It is not all that astonishing that an apostate and rebellious world is going to face God's wrath and judgment. What is amazing is that His love and mercy offer us the opportunity to repent and spend eternity with Him by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. His shed blood satisfies a holy, righteous and just God. By receiving forgiveness, we will miss God's coming wrath and inherit all He has planned for those who love and obey Him.

# Gospel Proclaimed Worldwide

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Despite numerous obstacles such as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, apostasy by professing believers, opposition from false teachers and false prophets, persecution and even martyrdom by decree of the Antichrist and False Prophet for those who do not take the mark of the beast and global ramifications from the bowl and trumpet judgments, the Gospel will be proclaimed throughout the Earth as a testimony to all nations. It will be the last opportunity for many people on Earth to repent and receive God's gift of salvation.

Matthew 24:14 affirms that: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."

## Greatest Revival in History

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21) was the "firstfruits" of an end times prophecy in Joel 2:28-32. The similar description of Joel 2:30-31 with Revelation 6:12-14 indicates that an awesome outpouring of God's Spirit will happen during the Tribulation period. In the midst of the most extensive apostasy and the severest persecution ever, the greatest revival in history will occur.

Where will this great multitude of redeemed people in the Tribulation come from? The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:3) will have a great influence on the 144,000 Jews from every tribe of the sons of Israel (Revelation 7:2-8, 14:1-5) who will come to faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. They, in turn, will be used by God to lead many Jews and Gentiles to faith in Yeshua.

It is of interest to note that, following the sealing by God of the 144,000 Jewish believers (Revelation 7:4), the Apostle John describes a great multitude who have come out of the Great Tribulation—more than likely as a result of the witness of the 144,000.

It is also certain that many lukewarm Christians, who were not taken in the rapture, but had family members or friends who were, will be part of this great multitude of martyrs in Heaven who become believers in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation period. The rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) will convince many non-Christians that the Bible is true, confirm that Jesus (Yeshua) is the true Messiah and validate God's warning not to take the mark of the beast. Also, many people will discover Bibles, books, audio messages, videos, newsletters, websites and other sources of truth during the Tribulation period that will point them to Jesus Christ. As the events foretold in Revelation unfold on the world scene,

many more people will realize the truth of the Bible and give their lives *to* Jesus Christ—and probably give their lives *for* Jesus Christ because of refusing to take the mark of the beast.

## The Proclamations of Angels

As well as using the testimonies of the Two Witnesses and the 144,000 Jews from all the tribes of Israel to reach the unsaved of this world with the Gospel, God will even use an angel to proclaim His Gospel (Revelation 14:6-7).

Three angels will make extraordinary proclamations at the height of the Tribulation. The first angel preaches the eternal Gospel to those who live on the Earth and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him [not the Antichrist] who made the Heaven and the Earth and sea and springs of waters” (Revelation 14:7). God created the Heaven and Earth and sea and springs of water and He is pouring out His judgments on all of these aspects of His creation to bring people to repentance.

The second angel announces impending judgment: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality” (Revelation 14:8).

Then, a third angel warns of damnation in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb” (Revelation 14:9-10).

God loves the world so much that He is giving a final supernatural opportunity to repent, as well as a warning of impending doom, if they do not.

# Tribulation Judgments

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You may think it “unnatural” that the world must go through a difficult Tribulation period before the blessings of the Millennium and the New Heaven and New Earth. But, doesn’t life and nature follow a similar pattern? To have a new baby, the mother must go through the pains of childbirth. Before a soldier can be victorious in battle, he or she must go through the rigors of boot camp. In order for a team to win the championship game, they must endure intense training, persevere through the regular season and face the challenges of a final game.

It is not difficult for any discerning Christian to recognize that we are rapidly heading toward God’s judgment when He pours out His wrath (extreme anger) on this world during the Tribulation period. The day of salvation is nearing its end.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus fulfilled most of Isaiah 61:1-2 but some of it (“and the day of vengeance of our God”) will not be fulfilled until the Tribulation period and His Second Coming. Luke provides a fascinating account:

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.” And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:16-21).

We know how this account ends. They were going to throw Jesus down the cliff, but He walked right through the crowd and went on His way (Luke 4:28-30). What is of interest for our consideration here is that Jesus was quoting the prophet Isaiah, but He stopped right before reading the rest of the verse which said: “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Jesus did that because “the day of vengeance of our God” will not be fulfilled until the coming Tribulation

period.

God Almighty is loving and merciful. He is also holy and righteous. Although God “is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9), divine justice will not tolerate sin and rebellion forever (Revelation 19:11). Throughout history, He has used remedial judgments to bring people to repentance. We need to keep in mind that it is God, the righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8), who condemns the wickedness today which is reaching unprecedented heights, necessitating Him to execute devastating judgments.

My father was a kind man, but, if my brothers and I pushed him too far, his voice would get louder and harsher. If we still did not listen and obey, he would go outside and break off a branch from the bush—then we knew we were in trouble. His warnings and his increasing anger at our willful disobedience were apparent, but, if we ignored them or refused to pay attention and stop our behavior, judgment came swiftly and harshly with a painful switch. In the same way, God says, “There will be no more delay. The cup of His great wrath is now full.”

## The Day of the Lord

The term “Day of the Lord” was used in reference to both near historical fulfillment and far future eschatological events: the judgment that will climax the Tribulation period and the judgment at the end of the Millennium that will usher in the New Earth. The Apostle Paul assures believers that, although the terrifying Day of the Lord which unleashes God’s wrath near the end of the seven-year Tribulation period “will come just like a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2), Christians “are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Believers in Jesus Christ will have no part in the Day of the Lord judgment because He “rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).

Opening the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17) will commence the Day of the Lord with cataclysmic signs on Earth and in the Heavens (displaying God’s spectacular power on the Earth and in the skies). It will also unleash the seventh seal which contains the horrific trumpet and bowl judgments (Revelation 8 to 16). Scripture repeatedly indicates that cosmic disturbances will be associated with the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-31, 3:14-15; Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 6:12-14). Some descriptive words concerning the Day of the Lord judgments: blood, fire, smoke, darkness, earthquakes, plagues, famines, lightning, hailstones and other phenomena.

While experiencing the California wildfires and then the smoke and debris from the Canadian wildfires which blanketed much of the eastern United States, I had a small sampling and glimpse of what the air quality will be like when a third of the trees and all of the grass are burned up during the first trumpet judgment (Revelation 8:7). God gave humans the breath of life, and, during the Tribulation, a world of rebellious people will experience shortness of breath.

The Day of the Lord is mentioned in various Old Testament and New Testament books, as well as five times in the prophetic book of Joel (1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14). Although the immediate context of Joel is a locust plague, it transcends its current circumstances to encompass an eschatological application of God's awesome judgments on the entire world. The migratory locusts (or grasshoppers) ravaged Judah's fields and ruined the crops bringing severe economic devastation. The illustration of the locusts' destruction is the basis for Joel to warn Judah to repent lest the Day of the Lord come with even greater destruction (1:15). The message of Joel chapter one is that natural disasters, such as locust plagues are harbingers of imminent divine destruction.

## The Darkest Hour

The cup of God's wrath has not yet reached the brim. Nevertheless, prophetic signs signify that it is close. The prophet Joel declares: "Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the Day of the Lord [God's great day of judgment and wrath poured out on an unrepentant world] is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Joel 2:1-2).

The only remedy to delay this coming judgment is by true repentance. Joel 2:12-13—"Yet even now," declares the LORD, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil."

God's judgments are temporarily delayed because: "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness" (Psalm 103:8). However, the very next verse says: "He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever (Psalm 103:9).

How close are we today to having this defiled Earth purged by Divine judgment? How near are we to the unleashing of cataclysmic judgments described in Revelation? Why will those who dwell on the Earth not repent of their rebellion and turn their hearts back to their Creator? There are some devastating judgments ahead.

Just as God delayed His judgment in Noah's day, He has done the same for us today. Eventually, however, the Lord destroyed the Earth with a global flood because as Genesis 6:5 says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Is it any wonder God destroyed the world by a flood? As during the time of Noah, our world is filled with violence and wickedness.

Loss of fear and respect for God has resulted in rampant sexual immorality, sorcery, violence, murders, thefts, lies, deception and idolatry infesting the world and infiltrating the church. The Day of the Lord's wrath, as prophesied by the Hebrew prophets and the book of Revelation thousands of years ago, is about to overtake those who dwell on the earth. The world is ripe for judgment. All around us today we see a world given over to every form of evil imaginable.

Things formerly considered in Scripture to be unacceptable are now considered normal—becoming so accepted that those who speak out against them are condemned. Today's generation is willing to accept and tolerate virtually any belief or behavior—except uncompromising allegiance to Jesus Christ and living by the truth and principles of God's Word. "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries...but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:3-5).

Today's decadent society is only going to get worse because, during the Tribulation, most people will "not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts" (Revelation 9:21). The mounting sins of those who refuse to repent are about to result in an outpouring of divine wrath upon the Earth—a time of intense judgment and severe cataclysmic events. It is beyond imagination what is in store for the inhabitants of Earth who persist in defiance and rebellion against the Creator.

The generation of the end times will be obstinate, rebellious and infested with abhorrent immorality, murders, sorcery and lies. The apostate church will be so lukewarm and compromised that Revelation 17 and 18 refer to her as a spiritual harlot who will persecute and martyr true believers. She will be "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6). This unrepentant *Laodicean* generation (Revelation 3:14-19) leaves the Lord no alternative but to send increasingly devastating judgments that will bring some to repentance, her false teachings and rebellious behavior to virtual ruin and cleanse the Earth (as God did regionally to Sodom and Gomorrah and globally through Noah's Flood—2 Peter 2:5-6).

Scripture warns: "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15). God's patience for the world will finally be exhausted as His judgments accelerate and intensify, culminating at Armageddon. The Antichrist and False Prophet will come to their end when the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, returns to Earth in power and glory to destroy them and their coalition of armies at the Battle of Armageddon.

With the opening of the fourth seal, authority will be given to Death and Hades "over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts" (Revelation 6:7-8). With the sixth trumpet judgment an additional third of humankind is killed (Revelation 9:18). This brings the death toll from just these two judgments to half of the Earth's population. Let's examine a few more verses to obtain a better biblical perspective regarding God's coming judgment.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who

afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

Isaiah 1:18-20:

“Come now, and let us debate your case,” says the LORD, “though your sins are as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 2:17-22:

The pride of man will be humbled and the loftiness of men will be abased; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols will completely vanish. Men will go into caves of the rocks and into holes of the ground before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, in order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?

Isaiah 13:6-13:

Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt. They will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not

shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger.

Revelation 6:12-17:

I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 18:5-8, 21:

for her [Babylon the Great] sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, "I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning." For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong. Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer."

The Lord has withheld His hand of ultimate judgment through all the abominations this present world has flaunted in His face. Nevertheless, He will not restrain His righteous judgment much longer. His delay in fulfilling His prophetic Word regarding the Day of the Lord judgments is nearing an end.

## Why Tribulation Judgments?

Why will the catastrophic events foretold in Revelation and other prophetic scriptures occur? Obviously, to fulfill God's plan for the ages. But, also remember, God created the Heavens and the Earth and the sea and springs of water and He will pour out His judgments on all of these aspects of His creation to bring people to repentance. The Trumpet and Bowl Judgments in Revelation will bring many to repentance as well as cleanse the Earth of sin and corruption.

God promised Israel (and indirectly all believers) blessings for obedience to Him and His Word (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Leviticus 26:3-13), as well as restoration for those who repent of violating His Word (Leviticus 26:40-45; Isaiah 1:18-19). However, harsh punishment is incurred as the consequence for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Leviticus 26:14-39). Daniel knew the reality of God's warning through Moses concerning curses for disobedience. During his prayer of intercession for the people of Israel who had been taken into Babylonian captivity, Daniel affirms:

As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth (Daniel 9:13).

How amazingly accurate God's Word through Moses has proven to be throughout the history of Israel, and seemingly true for the U.S. as well. And, how accurate it will, one day, prove to be for the entire world.

God unleashes the judgments described in Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture for several other reasons such as:

- God's holiness and justice require those who refuse to repent to face His judgment and wrath. His wrath is poured out on the world for its rebellion and wickedness (Isaiah 13:9-11).
- As a means to bring many to repentance. It will take the Tribulation to get some people's attention and bring them to the Lord, which He does because eternity is forever and it is better to lose this life and gain eternity rather than gain the whole world and forfeit one's soul (Mark 8:36-37).
- To bring about the conversion of Jews and Gentiles through the greatest revival in history (Zechariah 12:9-10; Revelation 7:1-14).
- As just retribution on those who afflict, persecute and martyr God's saints (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). When does God unleash His great wrath with the sixth seal? Right after the fifth seal with the cry of the martyrs. Vengeance upon those who persecute and martyr His servants. "For we know Him who said, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.' And again, 'THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE'" (Hebrews 10:30).

- To display God's power and proclaim His name through all the Earth as the true and only God (Exodus 9:16).

The trumpet and bowl judgments will help purify and cleanse the Earth of all the stains of sin which have defiled it since the fall of Adam and Eve. This purging of the planet is in preparation for Christ's Millennial reign over the earth. Revelation 16:20 foretells: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." Probably, the continents move back together as one large land mass in preparation for the Millennium. However, Earth will be completely renovated by fire after the Millennium in preparation for the New Jerusalem and Eternity.

## On the Right Side

Do not think God is sleeping, soft or silent on the sin and suffering that is afflicting our world. Increasing rebellion and sexual immorality (often expressed as enlightenment and freedom) have not gone unnoticed by the Creator, nor has the resulting pain and suffering inflicted on His creation by those whose supposed liberties exploit and victimize others or are self-induced from the consequences of disobedience to God's revelation of truth. Throughout history, God has periodically sent judgments to bring individuals and nations to repentance. When they refuse to repent, His judgments intensify. Persistent refusal to change their course has, a few times, led to total annihilation.

God, who is long-suffering and not wanting anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9), is now storing up His wrath for a day of vengeance and judgment (Revelation 16:19). This day of reckoning will bring even the bravest, most defiant and arrogant of men and women to their knees—either in repentance or judgment.

Even in the midst of God's judgment being poured out during the Tribulation period, He will extend mercy to those who repent. Although Scripture indicates the majority of people on Earth will refuse to repent, and instead, curse His name, there will be the greatest revival in history as millions of Jews and Gentiles come to faith in Jesus Christ and, in spite of fierce persecution, proclaim His Gospel throughout the whole world.

Don't be enticed or influenced by today's corrupt society; the day is quickly approaching when the cup of God's wrath will reach its brim. Don't be afraid of the violent and ruthless, for they will be the ones cowering in fear before their just and righteous Creator. The Lord is once again about to enter this world with undeniable power and might. Be certain you are on the right side, the side of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you are living the way you should by honoring Him and His Word.

Following God's foretold judgment on the nations, He will keep His promise to restore the Earth to peace and prosperity.

# Seven “Fights” with Satan

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Since Lucifer was created by God, he all of a sudden just appears on the day of his creation. He has no history of where God (his Creator) came from or how powerful He really is. Lucifer's pride caused a desire to be like God and to be worshipped, leading him to rebel against God and resulted in his “fall.” In Job 1:6-7, Satan appears before the Lord. You can almost sense him strutting in, arrogant and brash, thinking just maybe he could possibly defeat the Lord and overthrow His Kingdom. Although he suffered the consequences of his fall, he has never really seen God's “destructive” power manifest—he saw His power to create the world but never His all-consuming power in battle—so his pride may lead him to think he could somehow, perhaps, beat God. But, after the seventh decisive defeat mentioned in this chapter, Satan will be finally, fully and forever convinced.

While there are many other battles between Satan and his cohorts with human beings throughout history, I will focus on the following seven:

1. Satan rebels and falls from his lofty position in Heaven (probable descriptions found in Ezekiel 28:11-16 and Isaiah 14:13-15).

2. Jesus Christ defeats Satan during His temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

3. The death of Jesus appears to be a victory for Satan, but he did not anticipate the resurrection which assures his final defeat. The satanic principalities and powers were defeated at the cross (John 12:31, 16:11; Colossians 2:15), but they continue their evil deception and influences in the present age (Ephesians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 2:10) until they are stripped of all power at Christ's return.

4. Michael and his angels battle Satan and his fallen angels, thereby throwing them out of Heaven shortly before the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation (Revelation 12:7-9).

5. Knowing his time is short, Satan will intensify his efforts during the Tribulation to wage war against (seeking to destroy in any way possible) believers in Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7). However, Jews and Gentiles who accept Jesus Christ during the Tribulation will be victorious and defeat Satan through the blood of Christ and their testimony: “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death” (Revelation 12:11).

6. In buildup for the battle of Armageddon, Satan will gather all the armies

of the world, and, along with them and their nuclear weapons, advanced technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and his demonic horde, his pride will delude him with the aspiration that he can defeat God by stopping the return of Christ (Revelation 19:19). He really has no alternative considering what Scripture indicates is awaiting him. Merely a word from the mouth of Christ will defeat them all. Revelation 20:1-3 tells the outcome of Satan's futile endeavor: "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him...."

7. At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released from the bottomless pit and will mount a final rebellion. God's tolerance of insurrection ceases as God Himself intervenes and swiftly and decisively defeats Satan: "fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:9-10).

# Gog and Magog

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Russia, Turkiye (Turkey) and Iran are making alliances that will result in an invasion of Israel in these last days. Ezekiel 38 and 39 foretell a future invasion of Israel by a powerful leader titled Gog, from the land of Magog. Current world events resemble Ezekiel's 2,500-year-old prophecy about a coalition of nations including Russia and Turkey from the north, Iran from the east, Sudan from the south and Libya (and possibly Tunisia and Algeria) from the west, invading Israel.

Russia and a coalition of nations might invade Israel in retaliation of the U.S. support for Ukraine and Israel or because the U.S., in a weakened state, is unable to protect Israel.

These invading troops will come like a storm—like a cloud covering the land (Ezekiel 38:9). “It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan and you will say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwallled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates’” (Ezekiel 38:10-11).

Ezekiel 38:1-3 states:

And the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.’”

Gog is commonly believed to represent a person's name rather than a place, who is the powerful leader from the land of Magog. Genesis 10:1-2 and 1 Chronicles 1:5 indicate that Magog, Meshech and Tubal were sons of Japheth, who was one of Noah's three sons. Magog was the founder of a kingdom located north of the Black and Caspian Seas. Historical, ethnological and archaeological evidence favor the postulation that the Rosh of Ezekiel's time is the Russia of today. The region of Meshech is often identified as being north of the Black Sea (southern Russia and Ukraine and possibly Georgia, and Tubal as an area in central Turkey).

Israel's enemies will invade like a horde, just as prophesied in Ezekiel 38:8-9:

After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual place of ruins; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them. And you will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.

Ezekiel 38:15-16 states:

You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.

Both Russia and Turkiye (Turkey) are north of Israel with Moscow directly to the far north of Jerusalem. The forerunner of Turkiye was the Ottoman Empire which was dissolved near the end of World War I. Today, Turkiye is one of the most powerful Islamic nations on Earth and has one of the largest and best equipped militaries.

Many others will join in the invasion of Israel: “Persia, Cush, and Put with them, all of them with buckler [shield] and helmet; Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah [“house of Togarmah”] from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you” (Ezekiel 38:5-6).

Persia has been known as Iran since 1935. Cush most likely describes the region of Sudan. Put is thought to be Libya. Gomer, as well as Magog, Meshech and Tubal, was a grandson of Noah and a son of Japheth. The Hebrew name *Gomer* refers to the ancient Cimmerians, who dwelt in what is now southern Russia. Togarmah was Noah’s great grandson and a son of Gomer (Genesis 10:2-3) who located to modern day Turkiye.

I postulate that Gog’s invasion of Israel will occur shortly before the midpoint of the Tribulation period while Israel is “living securely” (Ezekiel 38:8, 11) because of Antichrist’s peace treaty but before he desecrates the Temple.

Israel would be entirely annihilated by this horde who invades her “to capture spoil and to seize plunder” (Ezekiel 38:12) without intervention from God (Ezekiel 38:18-23, 39:1-8).

Gog and Magog are mentioned once again in an entirely different scenario of Satan’s final rebellion following the Millennium (Revelation 20:8).

# Overview of the Tribulation and End Times

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## I Wanted to Go Through the Tribulation

As a young Christian, I wanted to go through the Tribulation to satisfy my curiosity of who the Antichrist and False Prophet would be. Loving adventure, I wanted to experience the extreme weather conditions and worldwide chaos described in the book of Revelation because, at that point in my life, I could not comprehend what it would be like—the descriptions were so far from reality at the time. Well, not anymore! Since then, our world has dramatically and drastically changed as wickedness has radically intensified and weather conditions have become much more extreme. I have seen enough natural disasters, terrorism, violence, corruption and chaos that I no longer want to be here during the Tribulation period.

Scripture reveals the Tribulation will be the most horrific time in world history as human rebellion and wickedness, as well as Satan's persecution, become incomprehensible. The cup of God's wrath will reach its brim. His judgments are poured out in increasing severity because of persecution of His people, incessant bloodshed, widespread sorcery and idolatry, unrestrained immorality, relentless blasphemy and defiant refusal to repent.

So, although I plan to avoid the Tribulation period (and, hopefully, you will, too) let's get a glimpse of what's ahead during the Tribulation.

## Preliminary Signs of the Times

There will be preliminary signs to forewarn us that the end times are upon us and that the seven-year Tribulation period is close at hand: great deception; wars and rumors of wars; escalation of natural disasters, earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places; apostasy; chaos in virtually every aspect of society from real, potential or fabricated global crises; increasing wickedness, persecution, violence, thievery, sorcery and sexual immorality; America declining as a world super power; economic turmoil; a global push for a world government and currency; impending inability to buy or sell without a mark on the right hand or forehead; unification of religion; blasphemy against the God of Heaven and persecution of His followers. All these preliminary signs of the times should alert those possessing discernment and a knowledge of Scripture that the end times are upon us.

These preliminary signs will give way to even greater deception with the proliferation of false prophets and false signs and wonders, wars and rumors of wars, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, famines, plagues and earthquakes in various places. A world government with one currency will be established. Spiritual unity will flourish with a cry for peace and prosperity.

The world will become increasingly violent and immoral. Weather conditions will worsen. Thefts, lies, murders, sorcery and demonic activity will be widespread. Lawlessness and wickedness will increase, resulting in the love of many growing cold. Apostasy (falling away from the faith) will increase as many will hate and betray each other.

Jesus' warning that these are the "beginning of birth pains" indicates that things will get notably and remarkably worse as the Tribulation period continues.

## Five Earthquakes in Revelation

Earthquake (*seismos*) literally means "a shaking." Earthquakes have occurred in the Bible on many occasions: Mount Sinai quaked when God descended upon it in fire (Exodus 19:18). When Christ died on the cross of Calvary, there was an earthquake (Matthew 27:51-52). As Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God in prison, a great earthquake shook the foundations of the prison (Acts 16:26).

Matthew 24:7 points out one of the signs indicating the beginning of birth pains prior to the return of Jesus Christ and the birth of Christ's Millennial Kingdom is earthquakes in various places. If you think that some of our recent earthquakes have been destructive, realize that Scripture forecasts future earthquakes which will be more severe than ever before. The book of Revelation specifically mentions five major earthquakes during the Tribulation:

1. With the opening of the sixth seal (which begins the great wrath of the Day of the Lord), there will be a global earthquake of cataclysmic proportions resulting in "every mountain and island being moved out of their places" (Revelation 6:12-14);
2. There is an earthquake mentioned before the Trumpet Judgments (8:5);
3. Right after the two witnesses are resurrected and go up into Heaven in a cloud, seven thousand people in Jerusalem will be killed in a great earthquake (11:13);
4. Another earthquake is mentioned after the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:19);
5. Immediately following the horrific battle of Armageddon, the most powerful earthquake ever will occur at Jesus' Second Coming. With the pouring out of the seventh bowl judgment and the completion of God's wrath at the end of the Tribulation, there will be the most severe earthquake to ever occur on earth. An earthquake of such magnitude that the cities of the world will be leveled, the mountains flattened and the islands will disappear (Revelation 16:17-20).

## Fire from the Sky

What we saw in Chelyabinsk, Russia was a meteor blast of biblical proportions. The fireball that streaked across the sky above this city of one million people, on the morning of February 15, 2013, was undeniably traumatic. Over 1,000 people were injured by the shock wave from the explosion, estimated to be as strong as 20 Hiroshima atomic bombs.

The Bible clearly foretells that great cosmic signs will be a prelude before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. Joel 2:30-31 tells us God will display wonders in the sky and on the Earth before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Acts 2:19-20 says God will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth.

Part of the cosmic disturbance associated with the opening of the sixth seal is revealed in descriptive language. The word “stars” (*asters*) can refer to any celestial body, large or small, and probably indicates a massive asteroid or meteor shower. If you were John in the first century AD and saw something like meteorites or missiles, what would you write? Probably something like: “the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind” (Revelation 6:13).

Imagine that you lived in the first century. How would you describe visions of modern military weapons, artificial intelligence and supernatural phenomena of the 21st century by using your first-century vocabulary? Probably the same way John did.

## If You Think...

If you think some of the recent solar eclipses were impressive and maybe somewhat eerie, be aware that the Bible predicts great and amazing cosmic signs that will be a prelude to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to set up His Millennial Kingdom. God says: “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it will come about that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved (Joel 2:30-32). During the Apostle Peter’s sermon in Acts 2:19-21, he repeats and emphasizes Joel’s prophecy that God will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth.

If you think that some of our recent tornados and hurricanes have been massive and damaging, read the prophetic words of the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. The earth is broken asunder, the earth is split through, the earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, never to rise again” (Isaiah 24:1, 19-20). Perhaps God gave us a glimpse of how He parted the Red Sea for Moses and the Israelites in light of the videos that showed water being sucked out of the ocean during Hurricane Irma.

If you think some of the recent wildfires, droughts and heat waves have been intense, Revelation 8:7 foretells that, with the sounding of the first Trumpet Judgment, a third of the Earth, a third of the trees and all of the green grass will be burned up. Revelation 16:8-9 indicates the sun will scorch people with intense heat:

And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given power to scorch people with fire. And the people were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

The Apostle Peter makes known that the Earth will be completely destroyed by fire; never again by a global deluge as in Noah's day which is signified by the rainbow in the sky as God's promise (Genesis 9:13). Following the Millennium, the physical universe will be utterly incinerated before the creation of the new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:6-10; Revelation 21:1). While multiple nuclear blasts could create great fires, earthquakes and tremendous devastation, the description in 2 Peter 3:6-10 is beyond the capability of any nuclear weapon. Only the Creator Himself has the infinite power to accomplish such an incomprehensible feat.

## What's Ahead During the Tribulation?

Out of a world in turmoil, amid warfare, famine, pestilence and earthquakes, a world leader will arise under the guise of saving humanity from seeming destruction. The Antichrist will sign a seven-year peace treaty with Israel at the start of the 70th week (the last seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ) foretold by Daniel. A "revived Roman Empire" under the leadership of the Antichrist will become one of the strongest economic, governmental and military powers to ever exist.

As Antichrist's regime tightens its control over the inhabitants of the earth, there will be increased surveillance and monitoring of virtually every detail of everyone's lives. Population control, environmental concerns and other means will be used in an ineffectual effort to create a utopia on earth.

There will also be a unified religion of rebellion against the true Creator in the form of spiritual Babylon. Religious unity with a global religious leader (False Prophet), who will feign compassionate compliance but, with a true nature of a ravenous dragon, will severely persecute Jews and Gentiles who accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

This apostate, ecumenical world church (mystery Babylon—the great harlot) will be thoroughly infiltrated with unbiblical teachings and practices; indecent forms of entertainment will proliferate and be accepted, endorsed and celebrated. False prophets will mislead many with unbiblical teachings, pseudo

prophecies and counterfeited miracles. Many churches will become havens for immorality and sorcery.

As the “spirit of antichrist” pervades the world, anti-God agendas will target virtually every aspect of true Christianity. Opposition to the Bible, biblical morality and evangelism (which proclaims Jesus as the only way of salvation) will increase, while occultism and New Age beliefs and practices will be embraced by multitudes in all areas of society.

People will become increasingly offended at the name of Jesus and by the Word of God. Biblical beliefs will be removed from society—not only the banning of prayer, Bible reading, creation science, Christmas carols, nativities and the Ten Commandments from schools and public buildings, but from every vestige of society. There will be open hostility and legal penalties for speaking about biblical morality, praying in Jesus’ name or sharing the Gospel with others—all considered as hate speech and hate crimes. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and the Bible will be labeled as the world’s troublemakers.

The Antichrist will speak arrogant words and blasphemies against God, make war with the saints and overcome them, obtain temporary authority over the nations and be worshipped by the inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 13:4-8).

Anyone who seeks to maintain a life of righteousness will be targeted to face open hostility from those who pervert truth and call evil good. Believers in Jesus Christ and adherents to God’s Word will be hated by all nations and persecuted because of their testimony of Jesus and the Word of God. Many will fall away from the faith, betray and hate each other as the love of many grows cold; some will be betrayed by friends and relatives and even put to death (Matthew 24:9-10; Mark 13:12-13; Luke 21:16-17). Nevertheless, the Gospel will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations. Millions of people around the world will come to faith in Jesus Christ—even in regions where the Gospel has long been suppressed and believers strongly oppressed.

At the mid-point of the seven-year peace treaty, the Antichrist will abandon his covenant with Israel and break the peace treaty (Daniel 9:27). He will commit the abomination of desolation by desecrating the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem and proclaim himself to be God and demand to be worshiped. Perhaps, at the dedication of the Temple, the Antichrist desecrates the Temple (the abomination of desolation) by installing an image of himself, denouncing and blaspheming the God of Heaven, proclaiming himself to be God and demanding worship (Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:6, 14-15). The Jews who reject him will face intense persecution—worse than at any other time in history. This will trigger “the time of Jacob’s [Israel’s] distress” (Jeremiah 30:7) or what Jesus referred to as “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). The Antichrist will unleash a time of severe persecution of the Jews and believers in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah—unprecedented in the history of the world.

False teachers and deception will proliferate. False christs and false prophets, empowered by Satan, perform impressive counterfeit signs and wonders to propagate their false messages. People with little or no knowledge of

God's Word will be easily deceived. The great harlot (the apostate church) will be destroyed by the Antichrist and his cohorts who hate religion, even the false religion they used to gain control over the entire world.

In conjunction with the False Prophet, who deceives the masses with false signs and wonders, the Antichrist requires all the inhabitants of Earth to take a mark on their right hand or forehead. Everyone will be required to worship him or his image or be executed. It will be virtually impossible to buy or sell without his mark (666) on your right hand or forehead.

## Second Half of Seven-Year Tribulation

The entire Tribulation is a seven-year period. The Antichrist signs a peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27) which he honors for the first three and a half years. The second half of the Tribulation period (considered the "great tribulation") is the second three-and-a-half-year period characterized by:

- Antichrist speaks against the Most High and oppresses His saints for a time, times and half a time—3 1/2 years (Daniel 7:25).
- Time of severe distress for Israel—greater than any since the nation first came into existence—for a time, times and half a time—3 1/2 years (Daniel 12:1-7).
- Holy city (Jerusalem) tread under foot by the Gentiles for 42 months—3 1/2 years (Revelation 11:2).
- Two witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days—3 1/2 years (Revelation 11:3).
- Woman (Israel) flees into the wilderness (probably Petra), where she has a place prepared by God for 1,260 days—3 1/2 years (Revelation 12:6), and she is nourished for a time, times and a half time—3 1/2 years (Revelation 12:14).
- Beast (Antichrist) given authority to act for 42 months—3 1/2 years (Revelation 13:5).

The second half of the Tribulation period will include God unleashing the trumpet and bowl judgments which consist of global and cosmic disturbances; earthquakes and volcanoes; sun, moon and stars darkened; meteorites and asteroids hitting the Earth; grass, trees and vegetation burned up; sea and rivers become like blood; demonic beings released from the bottomless pit who torment people for five months; one third of mankind killed by a 200-million human/demonic army; loathsome and malignant sores on those who take the mark of the beast; sun scorches men with fierce heat; kingdom of the Antichrist plunged into deep darkness. These cataclysmic judgments through the trumpet and the bowl judgments will be the final outpouring of God's wrath to subdue all rebellion and purify the planet in preparation for Christ's millennial (thousand year) reign over

the entire earth.

Near the end of the Tribulation period, a global alliance of kings, nations and armies will gather against Israel with a satanically-inspired plan to not only annihilate Israel but to actually fight against Jesus Christ at His return—in an effort to prevent the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom. Seduced by demonic spirits and by the deception of the Antichrist, False Prophet and the Dragon (Satan), these armies will converge in the Valley of Megiddo for the beginning of the Battle of Armageddon. The Euphrates River will dry up to prepare the way for kings from the east.

There will be cosmic disturbances and signs in the heavens—the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and stars will fall from the sky resulting in complete darkness. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky as the awesome manifestation of the Shekinah (visible presence of God) lights up the blackness caused by the darkened heavenly bodies as Jesus returns in splendid glory and with incomprehensible power.

Israel, surrounded by the armies of the world and on the verge of annihilation, will be rescued by their Messiah they had rejected as a nation 2,000 years earlier. Jesus descends on the Mount of Olives, fulfilling what the angel said in Acts 1:11 as He ascended into Heaven and what Zechariah 14:4 foretold. Unconfined weeping and mourning will entail as they behold their Messiah, the One who first came as the Lamb of God but is now returning as the Lion of Judah.

Christ will then establish His Millennial Kingdom to rule and reign over this entire planet from His throne in Jerusalem. The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. The great joy and peace on Earth promised at the time of Christ's birth (Luke 2:10-14) will be finally realized.

A great earthquake—greater than any before—levels the cities of the earth, every island flees away and the mountains could not be found. Huge 100-pound hailstones fall from the sky on men. There is nowhere to hide from this devastating judgment since virtually everything on this planet is destroyed—cleansed and restructured for Christ's thousand-year reign on this Earth.

The Antichrist and False Prophet, defeated by the brightness of Jesus' coming and the power of His word, are cast into the lake of fire. Satan is bound and thrown into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Believers in Christ will have the joy of reigning with Him during the Millennium (Revelation 20:4, 6). Messianic prophecies and promises for the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures that were not fulfilled at Christ's first coming will be fulfilled at His Second Coming and during the Millennium.

## Final Rebellion

Following a thousand years of Christ reigning on Earth, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit for a short season to deceive the nations one last time. The devil's final rebellion is easily and quickly terminated by God, and the devil is thrown into the lake of fire for all eternity (Revelation 20:3, 7-10). Next

comes the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). All those whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life will stand before God for their final sentence to their eternal destiny in the lake of fire.

The former physical universe will be consumed with fire as God recreates a “New” Earth and Heaven. The glorious New Jerusalem, “whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10), descends from Heaven to Earth as paradise is restored and believers live for eternity with their God. In His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11).

## The Vortex

Whether we like the biblical scenario described in Revelation and other prophetic scripture or not, what is crucial is whether or not it is true. It does not matter what you and I think it should be or want it to be, it will be as the Almighty Creator determines it will be. If it is true and coming on this planet, then we need to be prepared by repenting and turning our hearts and lives to the Lord. We need to study God’s Word, so we are informed and prepared and have discernment. Not only will what is coming dramatically affect our lives in the near future, but our eternal destinies will be determined by how we respond to the One who shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins and whether or not we believed and obeyed His Word.

All the end-time prophecies will be fulfilled and will prove Scripture to be incredibly and completely accurate; undoubtedly divinely inspired. As end-time events continue to unfold, believers should not be confused or fearful—maybe sadness for our nation and lost world—but assurance and joy because Scripture is being fulfilled and Christ’s coming is close at hand. Marvin J. Rosenthal summed it up eloquently:

Jesus is coming again. The implications of that event are staggering and incomprehensible. The wisest and noblest of men cannot fully fathom the impact the return of the Son of God will make on this planet and universe. At His presence, transgressors will be judged, faithfulness rewarded, and righteousness established on earth. The return of Christ will be the vortex of human history. Everyone and everything will be drawn into His direct, controlling force. Heaven and earth, demons and angels, the righteous and unrighteous, time and eternity, life and death—all will be under the dominion of the conquering King when He returns to bring an end to the rebellious epoch of humanity and personally establish a Golden Age.

## Will You Be Ready?

It is hard to comprehend, but most people will be oblivious or indifferent that Jesus Christ is coming back and will seek to maintain some semblance of

normalcy despite all of the global calamities. Matthew 24:37-39 states:

For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Luke 17:26-30 says it this way:

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

Jim Weikal makes the following comments concerning the above verses in Luke 17:

Jesus warns believers that He, the Son of Man, will return in circumstances similar to the pre-flood days of Noah and the destruction of Sodom. Specifically, He refers to eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, and building. The emphasis of Messiah's prophetic warning is on the people's enjoyment of life's mundane matters so much so that the return of the Son of Man catches them unaware.

The people living during the time of the flood and the destruction of Sodom had become so involved with, or so tolerant of, corruption and violence that they went on with life as usual. The majority had no idea what was about to overtake them. Eight people were saved from the judgment of the flood and only Lot and his family were saved from the sulfuric destruction of Sodom. Jesus gives us a solemn warning: "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew 24:44).

Do not allow yourself to become so familiar with the corruption and

violence of our time that you are not looking for, or are not ready for, the Son of Man's return! God is a righteous God, and He will judge corruption and violence as we have seen in the past. Only a very few people were ready to face God's past judgments. How about you today?

# Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ

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## Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ

Jesus Christ will return in great power and glory at Armageddon. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be swiftly defeated by a mere word from Christ's mouth and thrown into the lake of fire. Vultures will gather to eat the carcasses of the armies assembled to fight against the returning Christ. Satan will be bound for a thousand years. The Millennium will ensue as the "birth pains" give way to the birth of God's Kingdom, thereby literally fulfilling prophetic scripture: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

## Megiddo and the Valley of Jezreel

While leading Holy Land Adventures, I frequently visit Tel (mound) Megiddo—located on a hill about 15 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, 25 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee, 57 miles north of Jerusalem and on the southern rim of the Jezreel Valley. Megiddo has a magnificent view overlooking the large, triangular-shaped, fertile Valley of Jezreel (Plain of Esdraelon) with Mount Carmel on the northwest, Mount Tabor on the northeast and Mount Gilboa on the south. The Jordan River is to the east and the Sea of Galilee to the northeast. This valley served as a land bridge between three continents: Europe to the north and west, Asia to the north and east and Africa to the south.

Strategically located along the Via Maris (Way of the Sea), Megiddo guarded a commonly-used narrow pass on the ancient route from Egypt to Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). It was an important tactical military fortress—located at the crossing of two military and trade routes. First, it was a Canaanite city, then an Egyptian stronghold, next a "chariot city" of the kings of Israel and later controlled by Assyria and Persia.

Megiddo is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (Joshua 12:21, 17:11; Judges 1:27, 5:19; 1 Chronicles 7:29; 2 Chronicles 35:22; 1 Kings 4:12, 9:15; 2 Kings 9:27, 23:29-30; Zechariah 12:10-12). The New Testament does not mention Megiddo, however, the term Armageddon or Har-Magedon, is mentioned only one time in the Bible (Revelation 16:16). It comes from two Hebrew words, "Har Megiddo," meaning "Mount Megiddo." At Armageddon (Har-Megiddo), the worst carnage in the history of any military conflict will occur.

The hills and valley of Megiddo have probably witnessed more bloodshed in battle than any other place on earth. Megiddo is the site of the world's earliest battle for which a detailed account exists (15th century BC) between Egyptian forces and a coalition of Canaanite vassal states. Napoleon is said to have identified this valley as the most natural battlefield of the whole Earth and that all the armies of the world could maneuver their forces on this vast plain. A fascinating prophecy indicates that Megiddo (Armageddon) will be the site of the final battle of history (excluding Satan's last, but brief, attempt to harm the saints of God—Revelation 20:7-9).

## Heading to Armageddon / Har-Magedon

Almost 2,000 years ago, the book of Revelation foretold that events of the last days would culminate as the nations of the world move toward Har-Magedon (Armageddon). Near the end of the seven-year Tribulation period, the Antichrist, False Prophet and the kings of the Earth and their armies will assemble at the Valley of Jezreel as spirits of demons performing signs go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war of the great day of God the Almighty (Revelation 16:14).

Revelation 16:13-16 provides additional insight: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty....And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon."

Satanically-inspired armies of the past have sought to "wipe them out as a nation, so that the name of Israel will no longer be remembered" (Psalm 83:1-5). Likewise, demonically-driven armies will gather together at Armageddon with the intentions of eradicating Israel and "to make war against Him [the returning Christ]" (Revelation 17:14, 19:19). It will be a feeble and useless attempt to prevent the Lord from rescuing Israel and establishing His Millennial Kingdom. (Little wonder the Antichrist so desperately desires to proclaim himself as God in the Temple and will attempt to rule the world from Jerusalem. When that ultimately fails, he will seek to utterly destroy Jerusalem in a futile attempt to thwart Christ's Millennial reign being headquartered in Jerusalem.)

Many anticipate that the reign of Antichrist would be a golden age of peace and prosperity, but, just as the spirits that possessed Hitler led the world into World War II, the Dragon, Antichrist and False Prophet, along with the evil spirits in cahoots with them, will lead the armies of the world to their destruction at Armageddon.

## Multinational Force

In due course, a multinational force representing a global society is going to fight against Jerusalem. When it appears that all is lost, the Deliverer, the Messiah of Israel, will return from Heaven with the saints of God and overthrow the enemies of Israel. He will establish His Kingdom and rule the world in righteousness.

When I spoke to the U.S. military officers and enlisted personnel on a military base in Germany in 1990, shortly before Desert Storm, I said, “What we are witnessing with Iraq is a steppingstone to the fulfillment of prophecies by Zechariah.” Just as many nations of the world gathered their military forces around Iraq to enforce an economic embargo, it was prophesied in Scripture thousands of years earlier that all the nations of the world would be gathered against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2)—the “final solution” to annihilate Israel.

Zechariah 12:9 states: “And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” Zechariah 14:12 warns: “Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.” Although this could refer to a supernatural judgment by the Lord, it is riveting to realize that we have nuclear weapons that could cause the actual fulfillment of this verse. While prophecies such as this in Zechariah 14:12 were hard to comprehend for many years and sounded more like science fiction, they are no longer improbable, but rather inevitable considering the vast nuclear arsenal.

## Kings from the East and Kings of the Whole Earth

The threat of inevitable global war is forcing virtually all the nations of the world to amass armies for their defenses. It is recorded in Revelation 16:12: “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east [rising of the sun].” Revelation 16:14 makes known that demonic beings performing signs “go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.” This will be part of a global gathering of the armies of the world that they might participate in “the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” The focal point of this global gathering of “the kings from the east” and “the kings of the whole world” is identified in Revelation 16:16 as Har-Magedon.

Some prophecy buffs see a correlation between “the kings from the east” (Revelation 16:14) and the armies of the two hundred million horsemen who will kill a third of mankind after the four angels are released at the great river Euphrates (Revelation 9:13-19). At the time of the Apostle John, the entire world population did not total that unbelievable amount for armies. Therefore, many commentaries spiritualized the number or considered these verses to indicate a demonic army instead of human armies. However, the massive population of China and other Asian nations today could easily support armies totaling two

hundred million.

Daniel 11:44 states: “But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many [devote many to destruction].” Although “the kings from the east” seem to initially come to fight against the Antichrist’s regime, they will unite with the armies of the world to focus on fighting against the returning Christ as He comes in great power and glory from Heaven.

In many parts of the world, as in Asia, massive armies are being assembled for use in what will likely be the end-time Battle of Armageddon.

## Coming As Victorious Warrior-King

Satan and his cohorts assume they are orchestrating this end-time battle, but, in reality, God is the one who is doing so. Jesus Christ is coming back again—not as the “Lamb of God” to die on a cross but as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah—the King of kings and Lord of Lords. While Jesus first came as a babe in a manger and as a humble servant riding on a donkey into Jerusalem at His Triumphal Entry on what is commemorated as Palm Sunday, His Second Coming will be as a victorious warrior-king riding on a white horse (among the Romans a white horse was the symbol of victory). Resurrected believers with glorified bodies will accompany Christ at His Second Coming. “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14-15).

Revelation 19:11-16 gives additional context:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

By the word of Jesus Christ, “all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth” (Colossians 1:16), and by His spoken word, “the sharp sword” which comes from His mouth (Revelation 19:15, 21), will all the armies gathered against Israel be reduced to lifeless corpses scattered across the Valley of Jezreel.

On Christ's head are many crowns (diadems). A diadem is a jeweled crown or headband worn as a symbol of sovereignty. Many diadems signify that He is the sovereign ruler. Taking the crown from the head of a defeated king and placing it on the head of the victor was customary in ancient times as when the crown of a defeated king was taken off his head and placed on David's head (2 Samuel 12:30).

## The Lord's Vengeance

The Apostle Paul informs us that "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

Isaiah 34:1-4 pointedly states:

"Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. For the LORD'S indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree."

At the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, there is a stone wine press used in the ancient practice of stomping on grapes as part of making wine. The fresh juice of the crushed grapes splatters on the legs and feet of the barefoot stomper then flows from the upper vat downward to the lower vat. The massive armies assembled at the Valley of Jezreel and the surrounding areas will resemble grapes stomped in a wine press, splashing to the height of a horse's bridle (Revelation 14:19-20).

## Birds Assemble For Great Supper of God

Those who are not invited to "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7-9) could be part of "the great supper of God": "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, 'Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.' And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all

the birds were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19:17-18, 21). These words in Revelation are reflective of Christ’s words regarding the coming of the Son of Man: “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather” (Matthew 24:28). Although the armies of the world will gather together in seemingly invincible strength, they will be reduced to mere bird food; the flesh of their slain bodies devoured by birds of prey summoned by God to the battle of Armageddon.

Descriptions in the book of Ezekiel are similar:

“You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken,” declares the Lord GOD. Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, “Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as though they were rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war,” declares the Lord GOD. “And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward” (Ezekiel 39:4-5, 17-22).

It should be noted that Israel is situated in the migration route of millions of birds. To the east of Israel is the Arabian Desert, to the west of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea. It has been said that Israel is the largest bottleneck of migrating birds in the world. From Africa, they fly north through Israel to Europe and Asia; from Europe and Asia, they fly south through Israel to Egypt and Africa.

## Antichrist, False Prophet and Satan Defeated

The reign of Antichrist is expected to be the dawning of a golden era of peace, prosperity and unity. Actually, it will become the darkest hour Earth will ever know. Near the end of the seven-year Tribulation period, spirits of demons—performing signs—will go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty (Revelation 16:14). The Antichrist and the kings of the Earth and their armies will gather together at Armageddon (Megiddo, overlooking the valley of Jezreel in northern Israel) to fight against the Lord (Revelation 16:16).

Then, John saw “the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army” (Revelation 19:19). The King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, will strike down the nations with the sword of His mouth (Revelation 19:15-16). The Apostle Paul states the Antichrist’s demise this way:

Then that lawless one [Antichrist] will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

All this buildup for Armageddon with over 6,000 years of Satan planning, strategizing and developing global dominance and ominous military power with nuclear weapons and AI (artificial intelligence), with all the kings of the Earth and their armies and with Satan’s demonic agents, including the demons released from the bottomless pit—it’s still no contest.

The Apostle John adds the following:

And the beast [Antichrist] was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed (Revelation 19:20; 20:1-3 ).

## The Time Is Coming

All these signs of the end times recorded in the Bible are happening before our very eyes. The birth pains will ultimately lead to the birth of Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom because we are the “generation” living in the “season” of Christ’s return. The time is coming when the kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord (Revelation 11:15). He will establish His righteous Kingdom wherein true believers will rule and reign with Him for eternity and will inherit all God has prepared for us.

Some generation is going to see the fulfillment of Revelation and all the biblical prophecies concerning Christ’s return. I am convinced we are that generation. There’s no doubt about it—Jesus is coming back, but not as a servant like He did the first time. He is returning in all His glory as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation 1:14-18 says concerning the glorified Christ:

His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

# Hitler and the Antichrist

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While ministering on a U.S. Army base in Germany, I had a chance to visit Nuremberg where Hitler's rallies began and where the trials of many of the Nazi leaders were held before an international war crimes tribunal. It is of interest to note some of the similarities of Hitler's and the Antichrist's regimes.

- Just as a nation joined Hitler in his treachery and deception because he seemed to be their savior, the world will join the Antichrist's reign of treachery and deception because he will appear to be an unstoppable savior. "... they worshiped the beast [Antichrist], saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?'" (Revelation 13:4).
- However, just as Hitler's regime ended and justice was meted out, the end of the Antichrist's regime also will come and justice will be meted out.
- Hitler's henchmen were tried by an international tribunal; the Antichrist's fate is already sealed, and his henchmen will be tried by God Himself at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).
- Hitler's underlings were brave and bold when in power, but they were not so when captured and tried. Likewise, Antichrist and his minions will be arrogant and blaspheme God (Revelation 13:6; Daniel 11:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), but they will cower in fear before the Lord when their judgment comes.
- Most of Hitler's accomplices who were tried were executed (a few committed suicide). They were shown lying dead and helpless. Their bodies were cremated, and their ashes were dispersed to the winds. Antichrist and those who follow him will also be helpless and banned from God's presence forever.
- Hitler's hierarchy enjoyed wild parties and lived in opulence and pleasure while those they oppressed were deprived, starved, tortured and executed. Those who follow Antichrist will think they have a destiny of opulence and pleasure, but Scripture indicates it will be short-lived. History will repeat itself in that "those who once ate delicacies are destitute in the streets. Those brought up in royal purple now lie on ash heaps" (Lamentations 4:5 NIV).

The eternal destiny of Antichrist and his followers is the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-10, 19:20, 20:14-15). In contrast, the psalmist assures believers of God's promise: "You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever" (Psalm 16:11).

# Judgment Seat of Christ

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The Bible tells us there are two judgments ahead: The Judgment Seat of Christ for believers to receive rewards for faithfulness and the Great White Throne Judgment for non-believers to receive their eternal sentence. So too, there will be two basic responses from the Lord: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21 NKJV). Or “I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS” (Matthew 7:23).

In writing to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul stated: “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10). However, not for our sins (John 5:24; Romans 8:1), but for our motives and how we used our talents and resources. Romans 14:10-12 also makes it clear that, “we will all stand before the judgment seat of God” and “each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” The motives for everything we supposedly did for His honor will be exposed. Only that which we really did for His glory and not our own will endure. The rest will be burned as wood, hay or straw (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

1 Corinthians 4:5 admonishes us: “Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

The *Archaeological Study Bible* provides helpful insight in an article entitled “The Judgment Seat”:

The Greek word translated “judgment seat” is *bema*. A *bema* was a raised speaker’s platform from which proclamations were read and on which citizens stood to appear before officials. Three *bemas* are referred to in the New Testament: 1) Pilate tried Jesus at the *bema* in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:19; John 19:13). 2) King Herod Agrippa I was struck by an angel of the Lord while making a speech at the *bema* in Caesarea (Acts 12:21-23), and Paul later appeared before Governor Porcius Festus there (Acts 25:1-12). 3) The Jews of Corinth brought Paul to the *bema* to be tried by Governor Gallio (Acts 18:12-17).

There are two ways for believers to meet their Lord: rewarded or ashamed. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will give an account of our lives, our motives and our stewardship. I believe there will be many tears shed at the Judgment

Seat of Christ. Not for fear of being lost eternally, but shame for squandered finances, ulterior motives, wasted talents and lost opportunities to share the Gospel with others, as well as remorse for the hurts and pains we received or imposed on others. We may have to own up to persons we have wronged and for circumstances we have manipulated as we receive forgiveness, healing and restoration for offenses of commission (the action of committing a crime or offense) or omission (something that has been left out or excluded). If we don't make it right with certain people in this life, we may have to make it right with them in the next. Then, the Lord will wipe away all tears and remove all memories of failures, humiliations and disappointments.

Do not use your God-given gifts, talents and resources on that which is temporal or waste them on that which you will already receive your reward from human recognition. Instead, use them for the glory of God and invest them in that which will have eternal significance.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 says:

For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Jesus said in Luke 8:17-18:

For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

Hebrews 4:12-13 states:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Revelation 22:12 reveals:

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Matthew 19:30 indicates:

But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.

James 3:1 cautions leaders:

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

1 John 2:28 encourages us:

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

Since the day rapidly approaches when each of us will give an account to God concerning our stewardship of finances, time and talents, it would be wise to focus on God's priority: Evangelism and Missions. A notable portion of our resources, time and energy should be put into sharing the love and truth of Jesus with a lost and dying world. This is not only sound financial planning but will most certainly result in the best inheritance.

Ask yourself: Am I using my life and money primarily for personal pursuits and pleasures or to help fulfill the Great Commission of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth? What am I doing to advance God's Kingdom and reach people for eternity before the days of opportunity are gone?

Remember: True and lasting riches consist of spiritual blessings and the legacy of faith you leave your loved ones and others. We cannot take anything into eternity with us except the lives we touch for Jesus Christ!

## Called to Be Faithful, Not Successful

I attempt to live my life as one who must one day give an account to God for how I used the talents, finances, facilities and staff He has entrusted to me. Colossians 3:23-24 states:

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

The persecuted church in Smyrna was exhorted by Christ to:

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Matthew 12:36-37 states:

But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Every person is judged by their words because words reveal the condition of the heart. Because a believer has confessed with their mouth Jesus as Lord and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead, they are saved (Romans 10:9). Jesus said in John 5:24:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment [the Great White Throne Judgment and the resulting eternal condemnation] but has passed out of death into life.

# The Millennium

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At Jesus Christ's Second Coming in great power and glory, the Antichrist and False Prophet will be defeated at Armageddon and Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. The Earth will be purified in preparation for Messiah's Millennial Kingdom.

## The Kinsman-Redeemer

The following insight concerning the *kinsman-redeemer* and his relationship with end-time prophecy was written by Marvin J. Rosenthal and is used by permission:

In ancient Israel, a man known as a *goel* (meaning, kinsman-redeemer) could redeem a family member's lost inheritance if he met three criteria. First, he must be a kinsman. Second, he must be willing to redeem. Third, he must have the redemption price.

First, Jesus became a man to become our Kinsman. Second, Jesus was willing to redeem. Third, Jesus had [paid] the redemption price—His shed blood.

A *goel* sometimes had one more thing to do after redeeming a lost inheritance—often a piece of land. Sometimes there were squatters living on the land who had to be forcefully driven from that land. When Jesus, as the Kinsman-Redeemer began to break the seals to unravel the scroll [Revelation 6:1], He was beginning the process that would continue throughout the Book of Revelation of driving squatters—like wicked men, corrupt nations, counterfeit religion, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan himself—off the land. When finished driving off the squatters, He will establish a Golden Age upon the earth—the Millennial Kingdom.

## God's Promises Will Be Fulfilled

Will the Millennial prophecies and promises be fulfilled? Without a doubt! The same God who literally fulfilled the prophecies concerning Christ's first

coming will fulfill the Millennial prophecies at His Second Coming and during His Millennial reign. Any remaining prophecies and promises will be fulfilled with the arrival of the New Jerusalem and throughout eternity! “These words are faithful and true” (Revelation 22:6).

## A Thousand Years

Although the word millennium is not found in the Bible, its equivalent meaning of a thousand is—sometimes symbolically and other times seemingly literally. The word itself is composed of the Latin *mille* which means “thousand” and *annus* which means “year.”

The devil is bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). The saints reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5). Those who have part in the first resurrection will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6). Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit when the thousand years are finished (Revelation 20:7).

The Millennium commences as Christ rules and reigns on the Earth from the capital city of Jerusalem for one thousand years of righteousness, peace and joy (Jeremiah 3:17). Zechariah 14:9 is a wonderful promise for this blessed time: “And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

The Beatitudes (blessedness or happiness), shared during Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount while overlooking the Sea of Galilee, will become a reality during His millennial reign:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed  
are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who  
hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the  
pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been  
persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you,  
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice  
and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way  
they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:3-12).

Christians have been praying The Lord’s Prayer for almost 2,000 years. Most of you have prayed it many times. During the Millennium, this prayer will be literally fulfilled:

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom

come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen] (Matthew 6:9-13).

Believers in Jesus Christ (Jews and Gentiles) will rule on Earth with Him during His thousand-year Messianic age (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26, 5:10, 20:6, 21:7). I hope to spend much time sitting at Jesus' feet as He takes me (and whoever wants to join us) verse by verse through Genesis to Revelation and expounds on the meaning of each verse.

## The Final Rebellion

During the Millennium, some resistance to Christ's reign will exist, bringing prompt, righteous judgment as He rules over "them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15).

The final rebellion of Gog and Magog (the name given to the army of rebels and its leader for the final war in human history) at the end of the Millennium is swiftly terminated by divine judgment with Satan being thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:9-10). This "Gog and Magog" is different than that previously mentioned regarding Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Where do all these people who rebel come from? Since everyone must be tried and tested, Satan will be let out of the bottomless pit after a thousand years to tempt those who were born during the Millennium. There will be two types of people dwelling on the Earth during the Millennium. Believers in Christ who received glorified bodies and those who survive the Tribulation period and are judged to be "sheep," will enter the Millennial Kingdom. They will bear children as will their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so on. Not only will people live longer during the Millennium, but, with the absence of war, disease, famine or natural catastrophe, people will quickly multiply on the face of the earth.

Many born during the Millennium will submit outwardly to Christ's rulership but will harbor rebellion in their hearts. They will be dwelling in the four corners of the Earth—possibly in an effort to distance themselves from the Lord's presence in Jerusalem. And, when the opportunity comes to rebel, they will take it.

For many years, our ministry helped a prisoner, but, once released, his true nature was revealed when he ambushed me. Likewise, many people born during the Millennium will follow Satan's lead to rebel at their first opportunity. Revelation 20:7-10 gives the following account:

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the

four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

What does Satan do upon his release from the abyss? He leads another rebellion against God. Inevitably, he will be thrown into the lake of fire for eternity: he relentlessly uses every opportunity to destroy God's people.

Although Adam and Eve lived in a paradise known as the Garden of Eden, they were deceived by the devil to disobey God. Likewise, despite living in an ideal environment where Jesus rules and reigns during the Millennium, some people will rebel when given the opportunity. This shows that the real problem with people is not our environment but rather the nature of our heart. Those who want a heart for their Creator have sufficient opportunities during their lifetime on earth.

It is clear why God cannot forgive the unrepentant after some time of punishment. They are only sorrowful for being caught and the consequences they are suffering. And, if given another opportunity and free choice, they would rebel again. The proof of true repentance is that, when given the opportunity to repeat rebellious behavior, they no longer do so.

# Great White Throne Judgment

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A terrifying encounter—indescribable and beyond comprehension—awaits those who do not receive God’s provision of salvation. It is an inescapable event that every human being on this planet should soberly contemplate—judgment will one day be a reality to multitudes who remain in the valley of indecision, indifference or defiance toward Jesus Christ, the only means for a restored relationship with the Creator.

## Your First Second in Eternity

One second is all it takes to transform disbelief into belief, indifference into astonishment and mockery into reverence. In just one second, life-long thoughts, attitudes and emotions will be forever altered. In one second, all false hypotheses will vanish. In one second, the ingenuity and magnificence of the Creator will be unveiled. In that one second, you will know the reality of the One you embraced, ignored or abhorred.

Now is the time to come to know your Creator. If you meet Him as Savior, that first second will bring great joy. However, if you stand before the Lord of Heaven and Earth as Judge, you will surely tremble in terror.

That initial second will alter everything forever! It will either begin an eternity in His presence, with “fullness of joy and pleasures evermore,” or be a terrifying experience of “falling into the hands of the living God,” and the realization that you are eternally separated from Him and all He has prepared for those who love Him.

Be assured, that one second will come. It will definitely happen. How you prepare for your first second in eternity will make all the difference. Do not wait another second. Accept His free gift of salvation now! I promise that, when you stand before Him, you will be overjoyed and forever grateful that you did.

## Ultimate and Final

Scripture informs us that, following Christ’s Millennial reign on Earth (during which believers will rule with Him), the Great White Throne Judgment occurs. The bodies of all unbelievers throughout the ages—even those whose ashes were scornfully spread hoping that God would be unable to judge them—will be rematerialized to stand before Him. Believers in glorified bodies will be there to witness this judgment of each and every unsaved person since the

beginning of creation. Everyone who is not a part of the “first resurrection” will be a part of this “second resurrection”—those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be raised from the dead to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

The lake of fire is the final destiny for the antichrist, false prophet, the devil, death, Hades, anyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life, the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8).

This Great White Throne Judgment is the ultimate and conclusive place of final judgment—bringing greater trepidation and eternal significance than any other decree throughout history. The perfect holiness and purity of God assures that true justice will be determined and pronounced. There is no rainbow around this throne (unlike the throne in Revelation 4:3) nor any mention of the Lamb because the rainbow and the Lamb exemplify God's grace, mercy and redemption. At this judgment, the Door of Salvation is forever closed.

During the Tribulation period when Jesus opens the sixth seal, the sky recedes like a scroll when it is rolled up (Revelation 6:14). However, before this Great White Throne Judgment, Earth and Heaven (physical universe) flee away (disappear) from the presence of the One seated on the throne (Revelation 20:11). There will be no place to hide as people do with the opening of the sixth seal when they hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains (Revelation 6:15-17).

## A Good Attorney

When the day comes for us to stand before God, we will not stand a chance without having a good attorney! We are guilty as sin and we know it—especially when in the presence of a holy, righteous, just and all-knowing God. We have no defense in and of ourselves as to why we should be pardoned and free from punishment. Unless we enlist a good attorney to defend our case, we are doomed.

If you want to know what it may be like for an unbeliever to stand before God and be questioned by Him at the Great White Throne Judgment, then read Job 38:1–42:6. Like Job, they will have no adequate answer during their *dialogue* with God. Unlike Job, their eternal sentence is revealed in Revelation 20:11-15. Read it carefully.

At the sight of a solitary hand writing a message from the Lord on the wall of his palace, King Belshazzar’s “face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together” (Daniel 5:6). How much more frightening will it be for someone who rejected Christ’s offer of being their Savior when they stand before the Lord and see Him in all His glory? What recourse will they have when God Almighty pronounces His eternal verdict? Hebrews 10:31 warns that “It is a terrifying thing [for those who have not received forgiveness through Christ] to fall into the hands of the living God.”

One day the mouths of the unrighteous will be silenced, their arrogant hearts humbled and their treachery terminated. But, those who submit their lives to the One who took their punishment will not only be eternally exonerated but will be allowed to enter God’s Kingdom where they will be blessed beyond measure forevermore!

There is only one Attorney *good* enough to successfully justify your case before God: “He made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Only Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and shed His blood as payment for our sins. He is, therefore, qualified to be our Savior and Deliverer. Embrace Jesus as your Defense Lawyer (Savior) now, and you will have nothing to fear when you depart this life. Think about it. It makes a lot of sense and will make more sense when you stand before the Creator and Righteous Judge of the universe with all of your sins forgiven.

“And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [Defense Attorney; Greek *Paracletos*, one called alongside to help; or Intercessor] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

## The Books

Two books will be opened for every individual appearing before the Great White Throne Judgment. First, God will examine each person’s deeds as recorded in the Book of Works containing the record of the thoughts, words and actions of every unsaved person who ever lived, providing the evidence for their eternal condemnation. The truth of the matter is that all have sinned, violated God’s commandments and fallen short. Without Christ, no one is found worthy to enter into the Kingdom of a holy, just and righteous God.

Second, the Book of Life (similar imagery to the registry of citizens kept by ancient cities) is opened to see if the names of the condemned are recorded there, but only the names of the redeemed are found in it. Since they did not receive God’s provision of salvation (those before the time of Jesus Christ looking forward to the coming Promised Redeemer and those after the cross looking back

to Christ's sacrificial death for the sins of the world), they must be forever banned from God's presence. Without having accepted Christ as Savior, they are without hope (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

There will be no excuses, no exceptions and no exemptions; no future appeal from God's final verdict. Anyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire because they did not believe or receive God's clear pronouncements: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Millennia ago, the psalmist warned that the ungodly would not be approved in God's judgment:

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish (Psalm 1:5-6).

## Kneel or Stand

You can kneel before Jesus Christ as Savior now or one day stand before Him as Judge. It will be far more fearful to stand alone before the Creator at the Great White Throne Judgment than it is to live for Him in this world today. What will it be like to see God, your Judge, face to face, knowing that He is about to pronounce your eternal destiny? Yet, today is still "the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Do accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and have your name written in the Book of Life.

# New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem

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Once the Great White Throne Judgment is completed after the Millennium and the final destiny of those whose names are not written in the Book of Life is determined, the majestic New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Eternity commences with unimaginable blessings and joy for those whose names are written in the Book of Life.

Earth's inhabitants were created to live in a paradise, yet we are living in a world filled with pain and suffering. We were purposed to have a relationship and communion with our Creator, but there is silence and separation. We were designed to have vibrant health and eternal life, instead we have sickness, disease and death.

Everyone knows something is wrong, but most aren't quite sure what it is or how to fix it. So, earth's inhabitants wander, search and seek ways to resolve this paradoxical quandary. Naturally Solomon tried virtually every pleasure imaginable to obtain happiness. Yet, he concluded it was all vanity.

I think most of us, in our youth, expected to find pleasure, satisfaction and happiness in this world. But, as most people eventually discover, they either elude us or are eventually shattered by the disappointments and discouragements of life: hardship, sickness, injury and tragedy.

So, how do we resolve our dire dilemma? First, understand that a guest does not come into someone's house and set the rules. They must do as the homeowner decides. So too, we do not come to God on our terms, but on His, since He is the Creator of all things. His gracious provision is for a restored relationship with Him through the death and resurrection of His sinless, righteous Son. Truly, Jesus Christ is our only hope.

I don't know about you, but I am not content in this sin-infested world in a fallen condition. My only hope is found through Jesus Christ and the assurance of having unending peace and joy that transcends the limits of mortality. When all of the biblical prophecies are fulfilled, God's Kingdom will be established and this Earth will be restored to the paradise it was originally created to be. The entire universe will display the glory of the Lord. Then, God's promise of everlasting righteousness, peace and joy will be fulfilled. And, as the Apostle Paul stated, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

My prayer for each of you is that you experience *knowing* the Prince of Peace (Jesus Christ) and have the *sure expectation* of all God has planned for

those who love Him and obey His Word. According to God's immutable promise and plan, this Earth and Universe will be restored to an eternal Paradise.

Second Peter 3:10-13 describes God's final, climactic Day of the Lord judgment prior to His creation of new Heavens and a new Earth:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

According to *The MacArthur Study Bible* footnote on Revelation 21:1 "The entire universe as we now know it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13) and be replaced by a new creation that will last forever. This is an Old Testament reality (Psalm 102:25-26; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22), as well as a New Testament one (Luke 21:33; Hebrews 1:10-12)."

Following the Great White Throne Judgment, John saw a new Heaven and a new Earth and the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:1-4).

In the New Heaven and New Earth, there will no longer be any sea. The sea is often a thing of beauty to us but also can become extremely treacherous. In ancient times, the Mediterranean Sea was often a terror to the people. John was kept captive on an island surrounded by the sea which separated him from his loved ones.

Abraham "was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive

you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). The New Jerusalem is the eternal city that Abraham and other believers have longed for; the "dwelling places" which Jesus is preparing. The New Jerusalem will be the capital city of "Heaven on Earth," a place of perfect holiness, love, peace and joy!

## The New Jerusalem and Eternity

Following the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers, the Holy City, the glorious New Jerusalem, comes down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2, 9-21). The following describes the eternal home of true believers in Christ:

- The tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell with us. We will be His people, and God Himself will be among us as our God (Revelation 21:3).
- He will wipe every tear from our eyes and there will no longer be any more death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4).
- Those who overcome will inherit the New Jerusalem and God's abundant blessings (Revelation 21:7).
- The Celestial City will shine with the glory of God, and her brilliance will be like that of a very precious jewel (Revelation 21:11).
- There is no Temple in the New Jerusalem, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb shall be its Temple (Revelation 21:22).
- The Holy City does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb (Revelation 21:23). "No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory" (Isaiah 60:19).
- The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the Earth will bring their glory into it (Revelation 21:24, 26).
- The twelve gates of the city have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on them, and the wall of the city has twelve foundation stones with the names of the twelve apostles on them (Revelation 21:12-14).
- Its gates will never be closed, for there is no night there (Revelation 21:25, 22:5).
- Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27).
- The river of the water of life, clear as crystal, comes from the throne

of God and of the Lamb in the middle of the great street of the Holy City (Revelation 22:1-2).

- On either side of the river is the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2). The tree of life once guarded by the cherubim with the flaming sword at Eden is now freely available.
- There will no longer be any curse (Revelation 22:3).
- The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:3).
- We will see His face, and His name will be on our foreheads (Revelation 22:4).
- We will reign with Him forever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

## Heaven Will Not Be Boring

As a new Christian, I was not too excited about spending eternity praising and worshipping the Lord or sitting on some cloud playing a harp. Now that I know how awesome God is, my life is a perpetual reflection of praise, thanksgiving and worship. However, the New Jerusalem will be much more than worship; it will be a place of activity, adventure and perpetual bliss. A lifetime is not long enough to spend with the ones we love or the God who created us, so He offers us eternity to spend with our loved ones and Him.

Those of us who get bored easily in this life and crave excitement will be inspired and motivated in the next life with activity, excitement and one incredible experience after another. Spending time with, and learning from, the Creator will be in and of itself totally awesome. My goal was to visit every country on this planet in my lifetime, but time will run out before that is accomplished. However, I will achieve a much greater goal with a glorified body and all of eternity by visiting every place in the universe, talking to each hero of the faith, experiencing one adventure after another that God has designed and enjoying all the wonderful things God has prepared for us. But, most rewarding of all, being in His presence and beholding His glory!

While praise will continue throughout eternity, prayer will cease because we will communicate with the Lord face to face. Bible study will be unnecessary since we will know Him as He knows us. No more having to go to the gym to hit the weights or the treadmill or count calories to keep in shape. Exercise and dieting will not be needed because we will have glorified bodies that will never age or wear out.

## I Can Only Imagine

Imagine the most perfect day you can remember with ideal weather. Think

about the most beautiful place you have ever visited or viewed on this planet. Pretty awesome? And this is a fallen planet. Can you imagine what it will be like when the curse is removed and this planet and universe are returned to a true utopia? And, we will have that to enjoy and explore for all eternity—enveloped in the presence of the Lord wherever we may be.

There are not adequate words to describe the revelations of His glory and the wonders of creation that await us. Our minds cannot comprehend what God has in store for those who love and honor Him here and now. It will take an eternity to discover and enjoy all God has prepared for us. I wouldn't want to miss it for any fleeting pleasure this old world has to offer. The entire universe will become a paradise like the Garden of Eden. No wonder the heroes of the faith were willing to sacrifice anything in this life to inherit what the Lord has planned for eternity. Hebrews 11:16 tell us that the heroes of the faith desired “a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.” And to be expected, those who miss out on it will weep and gnash their teeth when they realize what they have lost.

The Bible records two people who were taken to Heaven: one was told not to speak of what he saw while the other person was permitted to give descriptions of his vision. The Apostle Paul “was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak” (2 Corinthians 12:4). On the other hand, the Apostle John shares a vivid description of Heaven (Revelation 4) and an amazing vision of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21 and 22).

Although Paul was not permitted to describe Heaven to us, the example of his life after he encountered the resurrected Christ and had a glimpse of paradise confirms its reality. Paul sacrificed in every way possible to bring others to faith in Jesus Christ to inherit all God has prepared for His sons and His daughters. Paul considered that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18) and willingly gave his life as a martyr. Near the end of his life, Paul confidently stated:

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

The Apostle John was exiled on the Island of Patmos. While there, he had a vision of the glorified Christ and wrote the encouraging words of hope and promise recorded in Revelation 21 and 22 which give us an incredible glimpse of the New Jerusalem. Just stop to consider; Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, and He offers us an eternity with Him in the splendors of the

New Jerusalem.

As author Randy Alcorn eloquently stated, “we who deserve hell for eternity are offered heaven for all eternity. The best of life on earth is a glimpse of heaven. The worst of life is a glimpse of hell. For Christians, this present life is the closest they will come to hell. For unbelievers, it’s the closest they will come to heaven.”

## Memories Wiped Away

Isaiah 65:17-18 states: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.”

All memories of physical or mental pain such as the death of loved ones, betrayal and unfaithfulness, humiliating experiences or grievous sins are forgiven, forgotten and forever removed from one’s memory. Nothing will be recalled that will ever torment or cause you grief or sadness.

On the flip side of this wonderful promise for believers is a notice to nonbelievers. When they die, their memory will be intact for eternity, but loved ones in Heaven will not even be aware you exist—how could they and not feel eternal remorse? I shared my thoughts on this at my mother’s funeral, and, not too long thereafter, my wayward oldest brother made his life right with the Lord.

The gist of Scripture seems to indicate that the saved will not remember lost loved ones, but lost loved ones will never forget their saved loved ones nor all the opportunities they had to receive Jesus Christ.

## Nothing Impure to Enter God’s Holy City

Revelation 21:27 affirms that “nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it [the New Jerusalem], but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Revelation 22:15 likewise makes known that “outside [of the New Jerusalem] are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying.”

Revelation 21:8 enumerates those who will not enter the Holy City: “the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars.”

In contrast, Scripture proclaims an opportunity to avoid that fate: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). How gracious are the words of Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

## One Day

Our current earthly existence of trouble, conflict, hostility, jealousy, envy, greed, pain, suffering and death will make us all the more appreciative of what God is planning for those who love Him and obey His Word—an eternal Kingdom where there will only be love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness and blessing. You will never again:

- Be lonely or humiliated
- Need a counselor for mental or emotional issues
- Require a health care provider, have surgery, need rehab or take medication
- Grieve at the gravesite of a loved one
- Face another natural disaster or tragedy

When Jesus returns, everything responsible for deception, disaster, danger, distress, despair, disease and death will be forever eliminated.

Only Jesus Christ has the key to open the door to God's eternal Kingdom. Putting your trust in Him guarantees that your future is eternally secure.

One day, those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ will be free from all pain, suffering, death, mourning and crying. God will eliminate the curse of sin and death, establish universal peace and restore the Earth to Garden of Eden-like conditions. God's people have longed for this throughout the generations.

In the eternal city, the New Jerusalem, sickness, disease, injuries, disabilities, hunger and thirst will be nonexistent. Broken bones and broken hearts will be forever healed. Never again will we experience phobias, insecurities, loneliness, separation, prejudice, exclusion, abuse, heartache or humiliation. Worry, fear, guilt, jealousy, gossip, envy, bitterness, revenge, lust, greed, anger, hatred, screaming, profanity, fighting or anything else that is detrimental to our peaceful and joyful existence will be absent.

Addictions, burglaries, muggings, rapes, molestations, murders, hostilities, terrorism, wars and anything else that causes harm will be evermore eradicated. There will be no need for orphanages, hospitals, rest homes, funeral homes, cemeteries, et cetera. Jails, prisons, psychiatric wards and abortion clinics will not exist.

There will be no more tornados, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, droughts, heat waves, wildfires, blizzards, tsunamis and so forth. No furnaces or air conditioning units as ideal weather will prevail indefinitely. The tedious task of dusting shelves and furniture will be terminated as nothing will deteriorate.

Bites from dogs, ticks, horseflies, mosquitos, spiders and snakes or stings by bees and wasps will forever cease. All animals will be tame. Thorns and thistles will never again pierce our skin. Acrobatic birds gracefully soaring through the sky; mosquitos and gnats dancing in the air. Innumerable animal species to entertain us in unlimited ways. Beehives by a door would be something to adore

and never again to abhor.

No more need for hand sanitizer or air freshener. No more embarrassing or inconvenient body fluids. Our immortal, incorruptible, perfect bodies will be suitable for all conditions.

Our sense of taste and smell will be greatly heightened. The fragrance of flowers, food and other scents will surpass our wildest expectations. Colors will be much more vivid; a range of colors never even imagined on this side of eternity. Every bite of an endless variety of incredible tasting food and drink will be immensely enjoyable. The sight and sound of a flock of geese flying overhead or a herd of antelope running by or an endless array of beautiful flowers. None of these descriptions can even begin to describe what we will see, hear, taste, feel and experience. God has so many beautiful and unexpected surprises that will leave us “oohing” and “aahing” throughout eternity.

One day soon, all of this will become a reality! All the specific details about life in eternity are beyond our comprehension, but be at peace because the One who has Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love, Infinite Holiness, Infinite Justice, Infinite Power, Infinite Creativity will be orchestrating everything.

God has prepared the New Jerusalem for true believers in Christ. We will have the infinity of eternity to enjoy His bountiful blessings. If we have been faithful over small things in this life, He will make us ruler over much in the next. We who have been redeemed by Christ, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, will enter the New Jerusalem to rule and reign with Christ for eternity and receive everything He has prepared for us. In His presence is fullness of joy; in His right hand there are pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11).

## This Planet Is Not Our Home

We live on a planet that, although initially made perfect by God, is now in a fallen state. Everyone and everything deteriorates. Peace and perfection elude us. Most everyone experiences some misery; some people die by suicide. People don't really hate themselves, they just hate life on this fallen planet with the curse of death on us.

God created this world to reflect His nature, glorify His name and be a blessing to us as His creation. However, it is being filled with violence, immorality, idolatry, sorcery, thefts and lies.

He designed eyes to behold the beauty of His creation, yet too often they are used to view the perversions of pornography.

He formed ears to hear sounds that edify, bless and encourage, yet sounds abound daily of cursing, anger and hostility.

He intends tongues to speak words of truth, love, hope and encouragement, yet they spew poisonous gossip, lies, hurtful insults, deceit and vulgarity.

He desires our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit, yet they are engaged in behavior and activities that degrade humans and dishonor Him.

He gave us hands intended to use the natural resources provided to build, maintain and help others, yet they are too often used to injure others and shed

innocent blood.

Instead, may we as believers in Jesus Christ seek to glorify God with every aspect of our being: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually! However, there is hope! This planet is not our final home—at least not in its current state. The good news is that another world is coming. It will be perfect, peaceful, joyful and blessed for all eternity—never again will the ravages of sin, disease, death and division affect it.

At Christ's Second Coming, He will establish His earthly kingdom. All the Earth will be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. Gladness and joy will permeate each heart who loves the Lord. At the end of the Millennium, believers will enter the utterly incomprehensible splendor of the New Jerusalem, wherein we will live with God forever.

## We Are All in Prison

While studying prophetic scripture one day, it dawned on me that all human beings are “in prison.” We are on this planet in a fallen body, in a fallen world, hoping for release. We roam (with limitations) this planet as prisoners roam (with limitations) their cell blocks and other accessible areas where they are incarcerated. A prisoner can appear before a judge or panel of judges who determine if the inmate has been rehabilitated and is worthy of release.

Similarly, God is the final Judge who determines who has been redeemed (by accepting Christ as Savior and having their name written in the Book of Life) and will be granted release from a fallen body and world.

Upon release, prisoners often find life hard and uninviting. However, when a believer is released from this life, he or she is joyfully welcomed into Heaven in a spirit body. At Christ's Second Coming, believers in Christ will receive glorified bodies—the dead will be resurrected while the living will be instantly transformed. These glorified bodies are designed to inhabit a universe restored to a paradise. No more detainment or limitations!

## A Day Is Coming When

- The materialistic person will find no pleasure in their possessions.
- The sexually promiscuous will realize how unsatisfying—downright repulsive—were the fleeting pleasures they so passionately pursued.
- The adulterer and pornographer will see how unappealing the ones they lusted after have become.
- The alcoholic and drug-dependent will despise their addiction.
- The undisciplined will regret how they wasted their health and resources.
- The vengeful and violent will grieve over their hateful words and

spiteful actions.

- The racist will regret their prejudice and bigotry.
- The manipulative will no longer be able to influence or take advantage of others.
- The workaholic will be remorseful concerning lost opportunities with loved ones and friends.
- The atheist and agnostic will know the reality of the Creator.
- Those who rejected Jesus Christ will realize how foolish, weak and cowardly that decision was.
- The ones who have sacrificed for the sake of the Gospel will be given a bountiful inheritance to rule and reign with Christ.
- The humble will be exalted.
- Rule by the ruthless will give way to reign by the righteous.
- The oppressed will be overcomers; the defeated will be victors.
- Sickness, suffering and death will be no more.
- The name of the Lord will cease to be profaned; only praised.
- God's Word will never again be mocked or ridiculed, only honored and held in high esteem.
- All false religion and idolatry will be done away with since the Lord will be king over the entire earth.
- Wickedness, evil, violence, murders, deceit, lies, slander, thefts, envy, greed and arrogance will be subdued, "for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

## Who or What Will Be Where?

In Heaven and the future New Jerusalem is everything we hold dear:

- Our Heavenly Father, Savior, the Holy Spirit and a host of angelic beings are there. A person on Earth could not see the Father's face and live, but in Heaven, you will see Him face to face.
- Loved ones in Christ who have passed on await our arrival.
- Old Testament saints, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Elijah, are looking forward to meeting us. "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11).
- New Testament saints, such as Peter, John, Paul and Timothy, will

fellowship with us.

- Heroes of the faith and believers throughout the centuries will welcome us. We may have lost friends or even family members for serving Christ, but we will inherit millions of brothers and sisters who will love us unconditionally. Just as I could not love my grandchildren any more, everyone there will have a complete and unending love for each other.
- An eternal inheritance is in store for us there (Matthew 6:19-20; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4).
- We will have new bodies that will never get sick, injured or die (1 Corinthians 15:26).
- Our dwelling place is custom designed by the Lord Himself (John 14:2-3).
- Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit will be forever present there (Romans 14:17).

“THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear” (Matthew 13:43).

## Paradise Restored

Truly, the Lord is faithful! All the promises and prophecies throughout Scripture dovetail into their ultimate fulfillment in the last few chapters of Revelation.

- In Genesis, God created the Heavens and the Earth (1:1). In Revelation, a New Heaven and a New Earth await God’s children (21:1-2).
- In Genesis, the sun and moon were created as “two great lights” (1:16-17). In Revelation, there is no longer any need for such light in the New Jerusalem, for the glory of God (and the Lamb) lights up the eternal city (21:23, 22:5).
- In Genesis, human beings capitulated to Satan’s temptations (3:1-4). In Revelation, following his final rebellion after the Millennium, Satan will be forever quarantined from the people of God (20:10).
- In Genesis, God pronounced a curse following humankind’s fall into sin (3:17). In Revelation, there will be no more sin or curse (22:3).
- In Genesis, death and suffering enter the human experience (3:16-19). In Revelation, God wipes every tear from the eyes of His children and removes death, mourning, crying and pain (21:4).
- In Genesis, paradise was lost as fallen man and woman are banished

from the Garden of Eden and barred from the tree of life (Genesis 3:23-24). In Revelation, paradise will be restored for redeemed men and women who are welcomed into the New Jerusalem (21:1, 2, 10-27) and are given access to the tree of life (2:7, 22:2, 14, 19).

- In Genesis, tears, death and mourning entered human existence (Genesis 2:17-19, 37:34). In Revelation, tears, death and mourning will be forever absent from the redeemed (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4).
- In Genesis, a Redeemer was promised (Genesis 3:15). In Revelation, the Redeemer rules and reigns forever (20:1-6, 21:22-27, 22:3-5).
- In Genesis, disobedient Adam and Eve hid from the Lord God (3:8). In Revelation, believers dwell in God's presence (21:3) and see His face (22:4).

Matthew 5:8 promises: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." First Corinthians 13:12 informs us: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." And 1 John 3:2 comments: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

# When Will You Believe?

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How could a generation be so undiscerning that they do not recognize the “signs of the times” foretold thousands of years ago recorded in clear revelations throughout the Bible?

There are many factors that have “blinded” today’s generation from identifying these amazing prophecies. Some are unaware because they have never been taught the prophetic scriptures. Some have been erroneously led to believe they are neither relevant nor true, but merely coincidental. Others are distracted and diverted by sports, movies, video games or other forms of entertainment that consume their time and attention. Drugs and alcohol may numb their senses, sinful pleasures enslave them and new technological devices demand their time.

How about advancement of scientific research that creates the false hope of one day defying death? Addictions to exploring the unlimited availability of information and images on the internet or being spellbound with the possibilities of artificial intelligence and encounters with extraterrestrials are epidemic. These, along with undermining the Bible as not being divinely inspired or even banning it, have robbed a generation from anticipation of, and readiness for, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Understanding Prophecy

Prophecies have, at times, been misunderstood by the Jews and the Church. The Jews didn’t see all of the Messianic prophecies attained (such as global peace), so they rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They did not understand that unrealized prophecies in the Hebrew Bible would be fulfilled at His Second Coming. In similar fashion, when the return of Christ was delayed, many in the Church have concluded that remaining prophecies are merely to be spiritually applied or are already achieved. However, just as Jesus Christ fulfilled numerous precise Messianic prophecies during His first coming, those remaining will be completed at His Second Coming and during the Millennium.

Amazing prophecies, written thousands of years ago, are coming about or will be accomplished in the near future. How many specific prophecies have to occur before the Jews will see that the New Testament is divinely inspired, and Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah? How many more prophecies will need to be fulfilled before the Church wakes up to the knowledge that Jesus Christ is returning soon, and Revelation is at hand?

When there is a global society with a one-world government, monetary system and religion, then will you believe? Or, how about when the seven-year peace treaty is signed with Israel? Perhaps after the Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem? Perhaps the inability to buy or sell without a mark on your hand or forehead will open your eyes? When the image of the Antichrist is worshiped by the inhabitants of the earth, then will you believe? Maybe when the Two Witnesses are seen lying in the street of Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days? Surely then, when Jerusalem is surrounded by hostile nations? What about when the actual battle of Armageddon occurs and Jesus Christ returns in all His glory, will you then finally believe?

I stayed at the house of a prominent scientist while ministering in the New York City area. During a discussion on Bible prophecy and the book of Revelation, he said to me, “Five years ago, I thought anyone who believed the book of Revelation was crazy, but now I am convinced that, in our lifetime, Revelation will be fulfilled.” I concur with him wholeheartedly.

A correct view of biblical prophecy and anticipation of Christ’s soon return will restore your hope, peace and joy, give you a zeal for evangelism and motivate you to live a godly life.

## Lift Up Your Heads

Those of us who are ready for His appearing are saying, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). We do not have to be afraid or intimidated by what is coming on the world scene. As believers in Christ, we are more than conquerors; we are overcomers through Him. We will be empowered to persevere until He comes, and we will be victorious—even in the face of death—by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of God.

I am not distressed or depressed—I am excited. I am not worried or discouraged—I am encouraged. I am not terrified or fearful—I am confident in the Lord. We are living during the most exciting time in the history of the world. All the prophets looked forward to the time when God would fulfill all of His promises. The Messianic Kingdom which believers throughout history have longed for, waited for, sacrificed for, endured for and prayed for is about to come to pass. God is almost ready to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

Following His overview of the signs of His coming again and the end of the age, Jesus gave the following encouraging words:

But when these things [all the things mentioned in the Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21] begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. Then He told them a parable: Behold the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of

God is near. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away (Luke 21:28-33).

I would have loved to have been alive during Christ's first coming and walked with Him along the shores of the Sea of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem. To hear Him teach the Scripture and witness His many miracles would have been amazing. However, I am even more excited to be alive during the time when the prophecies of His Second Coming are unfolding before our very eyes. Prophetic scripture is proving amazingly accurate, as it always has done.

We can have tremendous peace because, not only do we know what His Word says is going to happen, we know the One who is in control and determines our eternal destiny.

# God Is In Control

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As the world appears to be spiraling out of control to its impending demise, be assured that God is in control. We must look at unfolding global events from God's perspective in Scripture to realize He is working behind the scenes to fulfill His purpose for the ages.

I have read the book of Revelation in its entirety many times, and one truth stands out very strongly—God has it all under control. Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, the new world order, the apostate church, all of nature—everything is under God's control. God is the One who is orchestrating these things to accomplish His purpose for the ages.

I understand only to a limited degree why God is allowing all this to happen, but I know that, when it is all over, true believers will say, "HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS" (Revelation 19:2; also 16:5-7 and 15:3).

The following are a few of the many scriptures in Revelation which indicate that God is the One who is in control of all that will happen:  
Revelation 7: 2-3:

And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

Revelation 9:4-5:

They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Revelation 11:3, 7:

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

Revelation 16:9:

Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

Revelation 17:17:

For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

This world is not spiraling out of control to its futile demise. God is in control and is working behind the scenes to fulfill His purpose for the ages. We must look at unfolding global events from a biblical perspective.

There is also a growing spirit of apostasy accelerating across our land and world like a jet preparing for liftoff. Nonetheless, as Jesus' promised return draws near, God's Spirit is drawing many to salvation. In His desire for all to come to repentance, God is giving us increasing and intensifying signs of impending judgment. Just open your eyes and you will see all around you signs which are indicating that cataclysmic events are coming unless we repent and return to Him with all our hearts.

These birth pains of judgment, on a world that denies its Creator, blasphemes His name, distorts His truth, perverts His ways, disobeys His commandments, rebels against His standards, opposes His Word and persecutes His followers, will increase and intensify until the birth of His Kingdom of righteousness, truth, peace and joy.

When Jesus returns, everything responsible for death, disease, distress, despair, deception and disaster will be eliminated forever. Only Jesus Christ has the key to open the door to God's eternal Kingdom. Putting your trust in Him guarantees that your future is eternally secure.

Occasionally, I wear a necklace resembling a boat on the Sea of Galilee. It reminds me that God is in control. Not only will He calm the storms in my life, but He will lead me safely to Heaven's shore. I also wear a bracelet with the word Jerusalem emblazoned on it to remind me of where my Lord was crucified and resurrected, of the Millennial Kingdom where He will rule and reign from Jerusalem for 1,000 years and of the New Jerusalem He is now preparing for believers to inhabit throughout eternity.

# Champions in the End Times

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At pivotal points in history, God has raised up “champions” for special purposes. In these last days, He is raising up dedicated and faithful believers to be used mightily by Him. The world does not need another Savior or Messiah. He has already come and will be returning again, soon. What the world needs today are champions with God-given power to stand up and proclaim the true resurrected Messiah!

During four days of fasting for an upcoming area-wide outreach, I sought the Lord with all my heart for His anointing and for Him to be glorified. During one prayer session, I prayed, “Lord, help me to be relevant to this generation.” Instantly, He spoke to my heart, “It’s not about you being relevant to this generation, but you accurately speaking My Word and will to this generation. My Word and truth are timeless, and I am eternal. Relevance is irrelevant. Just proclaim My truth.” I did, and God anointed both messages in the large auditorium of my alma mater. Many either gave their lives to Christ or raised their hands in response to my challenge to have the courage to stand alone if need be.

As I travel and minister throughout the nation and world, I encounter two types of Christians: cultural Christians and biblical Christians. A cultural Christian’s beliefs and lifestyle are determined by contemporary society, while a biblical Christian’s beliefs and lifestyle are based on Scripture. Which one are you? One who falls by the wayside, deceived and caught in the apostasy? Or one who sincerely says, “Lord, I want to serve You with all my heart!” There is an eternity of difference—choose wisely!

## Cultural Christians

Cultural Christians are not wholeheartedly committed to the Lord. Instead, they are lukewarm, apostate, disobedient, undisciplined, seduced by the spirit of this age, caught up in the cares of this world and controlled by the cravings of the flesh. Having a spirit of compromise and cowardice, they are conformers instead of overcomers. They spend little (if any) time reading Scripture and rarely spend time in prayer seeking the Lord’s will. Lacking discernment, they do not recognize the signs of the times nor do they watch and long for the Lord’s return. They have drifted far from biblical Christianity, and unless they repent, will become part of the apostasy, deceived by the prophesied strong delusion which God will send upon those who do not love the truth and who delight in

wickedness.

As immature spiritual children, they will fall prey to every new trend and phenomenon that enters the church while being “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). It may be a slow, subtle, almost indiscernible shift, but in the end, they will have drifted far from devotion to Jesus Christ—some without even realizing it.

Cultural Christians should heed the warning of Revelation 3:14-19:

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

## Biblical Christians

Biblical Christians are committed to Jesus Christ, serving the Lord with all of their heart, mind, will and strength. Having physical, mental and spiritual discipline and self-control, they refuse to be tainted by the wickedness of this world. If they slip, they quickly repent, get back up and keep on going. They desire a close relationship with Jesus Christ more than the fleeting pleasures of this life. They have a love for truth and integrity. They diligently study God’s Word and pray fervently, sometimes with fasting. They long for the coming of Christ. They desire the genuine power of the Holy Spirit and will not settle for imitation and counterfeit. They will not conform for temporary popularity and convenience. In spite of opposition and hostility, they refuse to compromise the Word of God and their testimony for Jesus.

The Lord uses them in tremendous ways—anointing them with strength, courage, wisdom and discernment to stand victoriously in these end times. They are faithful servants and bold witnesses who will rule and reign with Christ in His Messianic Kingdom during the Millennium (Daniel 7:27; Revelation 2:25-26, 5:9-10, 20:4).

Biblical Christians should be encouraged by the words of Revelation 12:10-11:

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and

the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

Choose today whether you will follow a lukewarm, apostate “Christianity” or a committed, biblical Christianity—the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. Every single person of every generation since the beginning of creation, will one day stand before the Lord. God’s true servants will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, while all others will appear before the Great White Throne Judgment.

Do not compare yourself to others who merely profess faith in Christ; instead, measure yourself by the standard of God’s Word. Be inspired by other Christians who live exemplary lives and who influence you to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). Always be certain that your allegiance is to the Jesus Christ of Scripture—not “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

## Faith On the Earth

In His parable of the woman and the judge, Jesus asks a fitting question for today’s generation: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). The sad reality is that, in the case of many supposed Christians, the answer will be, “No.” Yet, for believers in Christ who love Him, study His Word, look for His coming and are empowered by His Spirit to walk in faithfulness, the answer will be an emphatic, “Yes!”

The question put to you today is: When Jesus Christ returns, will He find faith in you? Are you crying out to God for help and deliverance during these difficult times, or are you looking to someone or something else: science, technology or New Age philosophy to rescue, protect and guide you?

## Are You Distressed?

In Genesis 19, we find Lot living in corrupt Sodom. God rescued him from its devastating judgment because he was a righteous man, oppressed and greatly distressed by the sensual conduct he saw and heard while living among them. Lot’s righteous soul was tormented day after day by their lawless deeds (2 Peter 2:7-8).

The Lord said to Ezekiel, “Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst” (Ezekiel. 9:4).

Is your soul tormented? Do you sigh and groan over what is going on in

America and the world? Are you sorrowful and remorseful by what you see?  
May our hearts cry out:

Come, Lord Jesus! No longer let Your name be blasphemed. No longer allow Your truth to be perverted and twisted. No longer allow violence and murders to devastate this nation. No longer let lies and corruption prevail. No longer stand by as sexual immorality and sorcery seduce this generation. May truth and justice triumph! May Your name be exalted in all nations, and Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Come, Lord Jesus and establish Your kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy!

The people of this Earth will either fall on their knees in repentance or be brought to their knees in judgment. My continual prayer is: Lord, use me and this ministry to turn the hearts of the people back to You. Help me to prepare them for what is coming and to inspire them to walk in faithfulness until You return!

## Be An Overcomer

Separate yourself for a season from all that distracts you and earnestly seek the Lord through prayer, fasting and Scripture. Let nothing deter you from pure devotion to Jesus Christ to neutralize your effectiveness. Rather, yield to His Spirit and obey His Word. Instead of being a victim, be transformed into a victorious believer. Instead of being overcome, be an overcomer.

Revelation 21:7 promises: “The one who overcomes will inherit these things [the new heaven and new earth, the holy city, new Jerusalem ... listed in Revelation 21:2-6], and I will be his God and he will be My son.” However, the very next verse is disconcerting: “But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

Why the cowardly? Because the cowardly—the compromiser, the conformist—for the sake of convenience or for fear of the loss of power, prestige, property or life, will refuse God’s gift of salvation through Jesus Christ (even if convinced of its truth), or they will deny Him in times of difficulty and persecution. Unless they truly repent, the cowardly will fare no better than the murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers and idolaters who will be outcasts from God’s eternal kingdom.

The world is becoming increasingly violent and hostile—especially toward Christians. It is becoming increasingly unpopular and potentially dangerous to be a witness for Jesus Christ and to declare God’s Word. The time is at hand when virtually every Christian has to stand for their faith and convictions or deny them. Those who persevere under trial and remain faithful until death will receive the crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

So, the question is, will you be a coward or a champion in these end times? Don't be among the fearful who forfeit eternity with God; be among the faithful who inherit all God has prepared for those who love Him and obey His Word.

## Fearless

Matthew 10:28 admonishes us:

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

When Jesus returns, may we be found fearless, faithful and fruitful!

Romans 8:16-18 assures us that those who suffer for Christ will be richly rewarded and abundantly blessed:

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Revelation 11:3-12 speaks of the Two Witnesses, protected by God until they finished their testimony. Likewise, those who remain loyal to the Jesus of the Bible and the Word of God will be supernaturally protected until their testimony is finished. Daniel 11:32 says that, “the people who know their God will display strength and take action.”

An overcomer is someone who believes in Jesus Christ and remains steadfast. Our commitment to Christ should be like that of an athlete running a race: eyes focused on the finish line, paying the price to win—not merely a perishable wreath, but an eternal crown of glory. So too, an overcomer—like the determined Roman soldier in battle; so focused on victory that he would endure anything to accomplish that goal.

Let us not falter in the face of apostasy or persecution. We who humbly bend our knee to the Lord will stand with Him in any situation—not merely facing what is to come on the world scene in these end times, but with greater courage, power and victory than ever before.

## Purify Our Lives

The day in which we live is increasingly chaotic, confusing, corrupt and cruel because Satan knows his time is short. Likewise, the discerning believer

knows that time is short because the Lord's coming draws near. Daniel 12:10 tells us that, "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

I am certain that before appearing before a king or queen, most people would bathe and put on clean clothes. How much more should we purify our hearts and clean up our lives before meeting the King of kings and Lord of lords? We are so close to Christ's return that all believers need to examine and purify their lives:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (1 John 3:2-3).

*God seeks* those with pure hearts who will not be compromised by dishonest gain; will not speak with lying lips; will not act from deceptive motives. He desires those who will walk with integrity before Him in this world; who will not waiver in the midst of temptation, troubles, trials or tribulation.

We must ask ourselves: Is my mind renewed through daily Bible study, or being programmed by the secular media of movies, music and the internet? Am I becoming conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, or reflecting the values of the world around me and the godless lifestyle of my peers? Am I manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, or surrendering to the lusts of the flesh?

*God seeks* believers who will be "living sacrifices," totally committed to Him in every regard—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually—who recognize their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit; seeing their lives transformed by the renewing of their minds through God's Word; producing the fruit of the Spirit and using their spiritual gifts for His glory.

## Committed and Disciplined

In the midst of an increasingly corrupt and wicked world, a growing number of believers (God's remnant) desire to live committed and disciplined lives of purity and righteousness. Instead of relativism, they walk in obedience; rather than liberalism, they have experienced God's unmerited grace and are motivated by love and a passion to honor their Lord wholeheartedly. Not perfect in themselves, but relying on the grace of the Perfect One, they press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of them (Philippians 3:12). They will be found faithful when Christ returns and receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

# Champions

God seeks men, women and young people He can mold into champions in these last days—tried and true disciples devoted to the Jesus of the Bible and the Word of God. They are not those whose love has grown cold because lawlessness has increased (Matthew 24:12) but those who are known as Jesus' disciples by their love for one another (John 13:35). Their resolve is to honor the Lord, and their passion is to reach others for Christ.

Be one of the champions that God is raising up who are committed to Him, controlled by His Spirit, commended for their devotion to His Word, consumed with compassion for the lost and dying and compelled to proclaim the Gospel accurately and boldly. Amid a generation that tolerates virtually all forms of evil and intensifies hostility toward those who advocate morality, God is empowering modern-day heroes to stand for truth and righteousness.

Neither the world nor the church need yet another cowardly, corrupt, compromising “Christian”—conformed to this world. There are enough already. What is needed are those with God-given courage to stand up and make their lives count; those with strong convictions, character and commitment, demonstrating how to live as conquerors for Christ. Rather than being influenced by the world, believers must influence their world for Jesus Christ.

While a strong person stands up for himself or herself, and a stronger person stands up for others, the strongest unashamedly stand up for their testimony of Jesus Christ and God's Word. The wisest and most courageous person is someone who accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and then lives to honor Him every day. That person is a true champion!

I don't know about you, but I want to be one of God's champions, and I am willing to pay any price to be one. Will you permit the Lord to mold you into a true champion? Will you allow Him to strengthen you to stand alone, if need be, in the face of extreme pressure and opposition?

## Examination Time

Now is the time to *examine* our lives, *assess* the motives of our hearts, *evaluate* our beliefs, *consider* our involvements, *observe* our behavior, *appraise* our forms of entertainment, *ponder* what is programming our minds, *weigh* the words we speak, *contemplate* our attitudes and *determine* who or what is really Lord of our lives.

Those with biblical convictions will not participate in activities or conversations which dishonor our Lord. Nor will we sit by in silence as God's Word is ridiculed and Jesus Christ is maligned. We will not lower our standards to please others or refrain from witnessing while people around us wander in confusion—*dying* before our very eyes. We will not just sit there passively and watch our loved ones and friends be seduced by the spirit of this age of apostasy. We will—we must—speak up and say something, even if it offends. It is better to be *disliked* and *misunderstood* now for speaking the truth and refusing to

compromise our convictions, than to be *hated* later on because we conformed to the world in cowardice, or were afraid to tell them the truth they so desperately needed to hear.

## The Call

The Word of God calls us to be loving, gracious and non-judgmental to those without Christ and to rebuke and correct those who profess to know Him but lead others astray by their words and behavior. When conversations become unprofitable, words become crass or behavior become licentious, we should excuse ourselves—even at the risk of seeming antisocial—so the Holy Spirit may convict them by our response. When professing Christians display immoral conduct, we should quickly depart, even though our culture and other Christians accept it as normal.

Sometimes, a compassionate person must be intolerant of certain behaviors, and a loving person must condemn some activities. In the face of danger, love and compassion would compel us to warn of impending disaster and the resulting consequences. Likewise, our hearts are troubled and grieved as the moral values and lifestyles of this generation drift farther and farther from God's standard. We must endeavor to remain fully committed to Jesus Christ, refrain from compromising our biblical values and lovingly witness to those who have ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to receive.

We must search to uncover the truths in God's Word like the traveler wandering aimlessly in a desert under the blazing sun—earnestly seeking an oasis with refreshing, thirst-quenching water. We must persist in prayer like a starving person foraging in a field for food. Our personal relationship with Jesus Christ must become of such importance that all other pursuits pale in comparison.

## The Things of God

Instead of pursuing a meaningless existence in a world that entices to elusive dreams, tempts with temporary pleasures, promises a false hope, heroes of the faith passionately seek the things of God. As we love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds and with all our strength (Mark 12:30), we will come to realize that Jesus Christ satisfies more than anyone or anything else.

We will understand and experience what the psalmist meant when he wrote, "And besides You, I desire nothing on earth" (Psalm 73:25) and "as the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, God" (Psalm 42:1). Our desire is to do His will here and now while longing for His return. We will throw off anything that hinders our witness for Christ. We will be zealous to live pure lives before the Lord and walk in integrity before this world. We must share the life-changing Gospel with this searching generation, having the same fervor a firefighter would in rescuing someone from a burning house!

## Light in the Darkness

We must know God's Word in order to differentiate truth from error in an age of deception. The Bible is your only reliable source of authority by which to evaluate end-time events. Those who do not know God's Word will be bewildered and uncertain, believing the Antichrist to be humanity's savior, supposedly uniting the world for the common good. However, those who know the Lord and His Word will discern the evil intent. Those who spend time in prayer will be able to differentiate God's voice from that of an imitation or counterfeit. Those who are empowered by God's Spirit will effectively proclaim His truth. The people who know their God and His Word will have discernment, insight, understanding and the answers to life and eternity.

As darkness cloaks our planet, people desperately need the light of the Gospel. The darker and more wicked the world gets, the brighter the light and love of true believers will shine. Courageous Christians—adults and young people who will not deny Christ or back down in the face of opposition and oppression—are being raised up by Christ to fearlessly proclaim His message of hope and salvation with a world of confused and hurting people.

The Last Days generation of true believers will be focused on evangelism—having a zeal to reach this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:14). The heartbeat of the Lord before He returns is to share His Gospel throughout the entire world. This goal is so crucial that during the Tribulation, God will empower the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11), raise up 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Revelation 7 and 14) and even send out angels to proclaim His everlasting Gospel (Revelation 14:6-7).

Knowing therefore, His end-time purpose, all believers should intensify their efforts to reach this world “as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). My ardent resolve is that until every person in every nation has the opportunity to hear the Gospel, the purpose of this ministry will not be fulfilled, nor will my work be completed.

## Enlist Today

Like a recruiter for the military, God is enlisting believers “from every tribe, language, people and nation” (Revelation 5:9) to be mobilized for service in these end times. Will you be a “warrior” for Christ—one of the “brave heroes” of the faith?

The Lord is looking for teenagers who will not be seduced by immorality or cave in to peer pressure but will stand strong for Him. The Lord is seeking college students who will refuse to be intellectually and spiritually raped of their faith by professors and mentors but will, like Daniel, stand courageously to make a defense for their faith in a pagan and atheistic society. The Lord is searching for men and women who will not be deceived by false teaching and deceptive phenomena but will have discernment and unashamedly stand for biblical truth.

If you enlist in any branch of the military, you must take an oath. So, make

an *oath* before the Lord that, by His grace and with His help, you will seek to be an “overcomer” and “champion” in these last days. It is time for you to stand for your faith and convictions. There is no more middle of the road. The distinction between believer and nonbeliever is becoming increasingly clear as each person chooses to obey and support biblical truth or oppose and deny it.

## To the Seven Churches

Reflecting upon the words of Jesus to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 provides useful insight which has both immediate and eternal implications: 1) false teaching—so contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, 2) sexual immorality—so purify your life and relationships, 3) idolatry—so put no thing or no one before the Lord and 4) being lukewarm and leaving your first love—so keep your passion for Jesus Christ and His Word burning.

Jesus’ four main commendations to the seven churches in Revelation were for their: 1) love, faith and service—so be active in evangelism and missions; 2) endurance and perseverance—so remain faithful to the end; 3) sexual and spiritual purity—so keep yourself pure physically, mentally and spiritually; and 4) faithfulness to His Word and Name—so stand for the truth of Scripture and your testimony of the Jesus of the Bible.

## A Word to Bereans

To those who are “Bereans” (Acts 17:10-11), striving to stay faithful to the Word of God, Christ’s words to the Church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) are meaningful for you:

The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand [church or ministry] out of its place—unless you repent. But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”

As the coming of the Lord approaches and life as a Christian becomes more

difficult, we must not lose our love and desire for Jesus Christ. Instead, we must seek Him with all our hearts through the study of His Word and with prayer and fasting. Proclaim His message of salvation to a lost and searching world and encourage them with the prophecies and promise of His return.

## Be Watchful

Daily, more amazing biblical prophecies unfold on the world scene. Be watchful and faithful!

Every believer is responsible to be ready, alert and watchful for the Lord's return (Luke 12:35-40). Jesus goes on in Luke 12:42-46 to illustrate the blessings the watchful and faithful steward will receive as well as the punishment that will be meted out to the indifferent and unfaithful steward. As the Lord says:

Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, "My master will be a long time in coming," and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

The ongoing prayer of my ministry is:

Lord, use me to turn the hearts of Your people back to You, or let me die trying. Help me to inspire them to walk in endurance and faithfulness until You return.

## Perseverance in the End Times

One of the most important admonitions Jesus gave regarding the end times—repeated several times in Revelation and elsewhere in prophetic scriptures—is to endure to the end, be patient, do not shrink back, hold fast, be faithful unto death. Hold on. Overcome. Persevere. What is coming on the world and to believers in Jesus Christ will require great perseverance, endurance and faithfulness.

Matthew 10:21-22:

Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to

death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Matthew 24:12-13:

Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Mark 13:13:

You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Luke 21:19:

By your endurance you will gain your lives.

James 5:7-8:

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Hebrews 10:36-39:

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Revelation 2:10:

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Revelation 2:25-26:

Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS.

Revelation 13:10:

If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 14:12:

Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Revelation 21:7:

He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Unlike those who are no longer watching and waiting for the Lord's return because they have become weary or are caught up in the cares of the world, choose to be like the Apostle Paul: fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith to the very end of your life (2 Timothy 4:7).

# As You See the Day Approaching

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What is ahead for this nation and world will require extraordinary faith, strength, courage, discipline, determination, discernment, integrity, commitment and love to endure. What is coming will affect every facet of your life. What are you going to do, what should you be doing, as you see the Day of Christ's return approaching? How can you be prepared?

My suggestion is to begin immediately to get into the best possible shape—physically, mentally, emotionally, and above all, spiritually. The following are some crucial admonitions for believers in these end times. Now is the time to:

**Love His appearing:** Some Christians are indifferent and have little interest in end-time prophecy, but God's Word promises "the crown of righteousness ... to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8). We should be eagerly awaiting our Lord's return because Christ "will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him" (Hebrews 9:28). "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). We are to "wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). We are to "fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).

**Be ready:** Stay awake and "be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42). In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus ends His teaching on His Second Coming by giving three parables. Each of these parables provides us with a key insight to keep in mind as we await Jesus' return. First, we are called to be ready in case Jesus comes sooner than expected (Matthew 24:42-51). Second, we are called to be ready in case Jesus delays longer than anticipated (Matthew 25:1-13). Third, we are called to remain faithful and use the opportunities that God has given us to bear fruit as we await His return (Matthew 25:14-30).

**Research Scripture and prophecy:** Have consistent and in-depth Bible study, investigation, reflection and meditation on God's Word—with special focus on end-time prophecy. Recognize the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3). "Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3). God will fulfill all of His prophecies and promises. He will triumph and establish His eternal Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy.

**Reach toward the heavens:** Pray daily for love, wisdom and strength to

remain steadfast during difficulties and persecution.

**Develop discernment:** Do not be deceived by the deception Jesus warned about (Matthew 24:24) and the apostasy, false signs and wonders and deluding influence foretold by the Apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3-11).

**Attend church:** Do not forsake “assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25).

**Persevere and remain faithful:** Endurance is needed because the end times are difficult; remain steadfast in your commitment to the Lord all the remaining days of your life; be faithful even unto death (Revelation 2:10).

**Purify your life:** You ought “to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:11-12). Everyone who has the hope of Christ’s return “purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3). The Apostle Paul instructed us “to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Titus 2:12-13). Respect your body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, by fleeing immoral behavior and anything else that dishonors the Lord.

**Regenerate your health:** We are living during stressful times when we need a strong immune system. Instead of overindulging in unwholesome food and unhealthy snacks (which lead to the host of unwanted ailments and diseases that are surging today), substitute “junk food” and “empty calories” with nutritious food the Creator designed for you to consume. Instead of sitting around watching television and following social media, get some exercise and proper rest.

**Be a witness:** Unashamedly and boldly share your faith and hope in Jesus Christ with others. God’s priority in the end times is evangelism and missions so be a part of spreading the Gospel to the ends of the Earth (Matthew 24:14)

Implementing the above, along with God’s Spirit (Zechariah 4:6), will enable you to stand victoriously in these days. The alternative is not very comforting so don’t sit idly by and do nothing—do what God’s Word clearly teaches.

## Rediscover Your Journey with GOD

We are rapidly nearing the end of this age and the return of Jesus Christ. Yet, many in the Church are indifferent, lukewarm or outright apostate. Instead of watching for the coming of the Lord and loving His appearing, many are absorbed in entertainment, social media and the “cares of this world” or are involved in behavior and practices that dishonor the Lord and are contrary to His Word.

Many parents dedicated their children to God and vowed to raise them in the instruction of Scripture: “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). However, now they

allow (or actually encourage) their children to watch movies that reflect a lifestyle contrary to what Scripture teaches: laced with sorcery and occultism, glamorizing violence, promoting lies and theft, glorifying sexually promiscuous behavior and taking God's name in vain.

What does the Lord have to do to wake up this generation and rekindle the fire of commitment and obedience to Him and His Word? How far have we fallen and drifted from pure devotion to Christ (1 John 3:2-3; 2 Corinthians 11:2)? Will the Son of Man find faith or unfaithfulness when He returns (Luke 18:8)? Will His Church be committed or compromised? Will His Bride be longing for and awaiting His return or be with those who actually attempt to fight against Him at Armageddon (Rev. 19:19)?

Get started today on your journey of rediscovering what God desires for your life and family. Recommit yourself and your children to the Lord by making the most important commandment a priority in your life: "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH" (Mark 12:30).

## Summation

The book of Revelation and all end-time prophecy can be summed up in two words: We Win!

While we may not have the opportunity in this life to meet, we have the Millennium and eternity in the New Jerusalem to enjoy the presence of our Lord and each other. What a glorious future awaits us as we bask in God's glory with ineffable joy and fellowship with Him throughout eternity in a marvelous paradise (Revelation 21).

I hope to see you in the rapture or in Heaven—whichever comes first for us.

# Experience His Reality

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If you have not already done so, today is the day to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. As one whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, you will inherit all that God has prepared for those who love Him and obey His Word. Once you experience a life-changing faith in Jesus Christ, you will want to grow in this new relationship and begin uncovering the depths of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Him and His Word.

For additional information on Jesus Christ and how you can come to know Him in a real and personal way, request a free copy of my book *Who Is This Jesus?* And, to help you grow in your new life in Christ, I have written several books such as *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ* and *Overcoming the "Giants" in Your Life*.

I do hope you will join me and the millions of others throughout history whose lives have been dramatically changed through the transforming power of the resurrected Christ. Surrender your life to Him today. Experience His peace and the joy that transcends your circumstances—and have hope for the life to come. Receiving Him as Savior and Lord will be the wisest and most courageous decision you will ever make. Living fully for Him is the most exciting, challenging and fulfilling life you can live.

John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

My prayer for you:

Lord, I pray for each person reading these words, that Your Spirit will draw them to You. Bring them to repentance and a restored relationship with You. Give them the assurance that they have been forgiven and that their name is written in the Book of Life. Grant them Your peace in the midst of persecution and instill within them the faith, courage and strength to stand for their testimony of Jesus Christ and for the Word of God.

Thank You, Lord, for Your sacrificial death and shed blood that saves us from the wrath we all deserve. Thank You for Your amazing grace and gift of salvation. Thank You that we will be with You when You

come back to subdue the nations of the world and to reign with You during the Millennium and throughout eternity. We acknowledge You as the only Lord and surrender our lives, futures and eternal destinies to You. In Jesus' name, amen.



# Overview of Revelation, A Quick Guide to Chapter Highlights

Written and Compiled by Bill and BJ Rudge  
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## **Chapter 1**

- Blessing for reading, hearing and obeying the words written in Revelation
- Vision of glorified Jesus Christ

## **Chapters 2 and 3**

- Letters to the seven churches:
  - Ephesus – left first love
  - Smyrna – persecution
  - Pergamum – compromise
  - Thyatira – corruption
  - Sardis – spiritually dead
  - Philadelphia – faithful
  - Laodicea – lukewarm



## Chapter 4

- Door standing open in heaven
- Throne in heaven
- Twenty-four elders
- Four living creatures
- Worship of Lord God Almighty



## Chapter 5

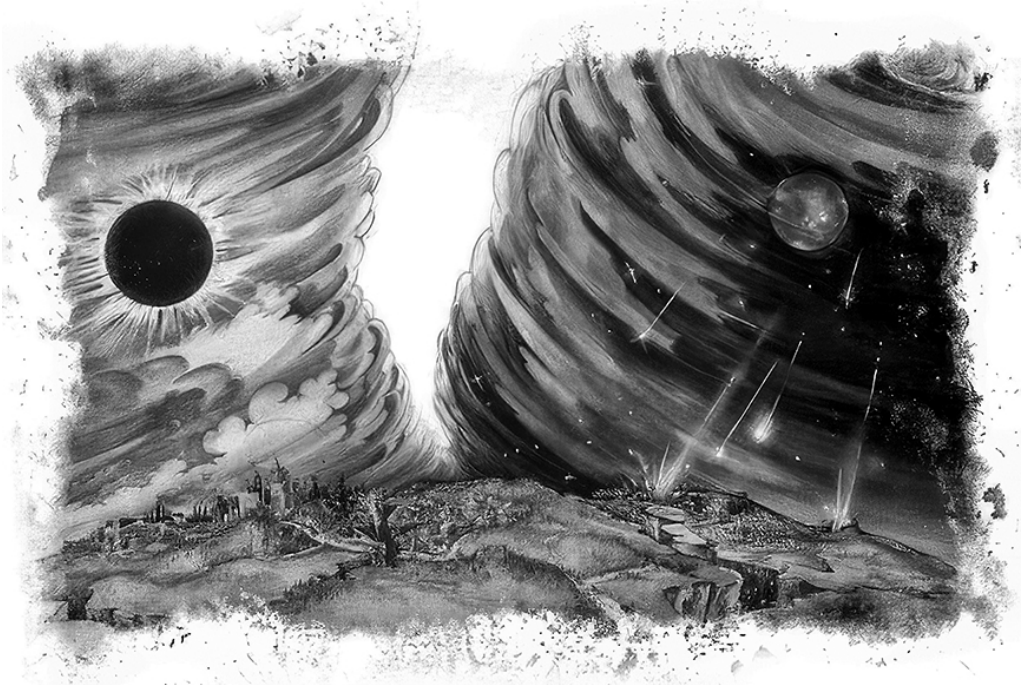
- Who is worthy to open the scroll?
- Scroll with seven seals (title deed to the earth)
- Lamb (Jesus) is the only one worthy to open the scroll
- Worship of the Lamb



## Chapter 6

- Seal Judgments:

1. White horse = conquest through false peace
  2. Red horse = world wide warfare
  3. Black horse = global famine
  4. Pale horse = death
  5. Martyrs = persecution
  6. Global and cosmic disturbances = devastation
- Wrath of the Lamb



## Chapter 7

- 144,000 Jews sealed
- Great multitude of martyrs in heaven from the Tribulation



### **Chapters 8 and 9**

- Seventh seal: silence in heaven as prelude to seven trumpet judgments
- Trumpet Judgments:
  1. Hail, fire and blood – 1/3 of earth burned
  2. Something like a great mountain – giant meteor or asteroid – 1/3 of sea becomes blood
  3. Wormwood – a great star (comet) burning like a torch poisons 1/3 of the rivers and streams of water
  4. 1/3 of sun, moon and stars darkened
  5. Locusts (demonic beings) released from bottomless pit – torment people for five months
  6. Four angels released at river Euphrates; 1/3 of mankind killed by 200 million horsemen
- People still refuse to repent

### **Chapter 10**

- Little book opened (from 5:7) – sweet in John's mouth, bitter in his stomach
- Seven peals of thunder

### **Chapter 11**

- Two witnesses
- Seventh trumpet: victory of Jesus Christ proclaimed



## Chapter 12

- Great sign in heaven: woman (Israel), child (Jesus) and dragon (Satan)
- Satan thrown out of heaven to earth
- Persecution and protection of Israel
- Persecution of those who hold to testimony of Jesus

## Chapter 13

- Satanic trinity: dragon (Satan), beast from the sea (Antichrist), beast from the earth (False Prophet)
- Worship image of the beast or be killed
- Mark of the beast (666)

## Chapter 14

- The Lamb and the 144,000
- Angel proclaims eternal Gospel
- Angel pronounces fall of Babylon
- Angel warns of doom for anyone who worships the beast and his image or receives his mark
- Reaping the earth's harvest

## Chapter 15

- Prelude to the bowl judgments
- Seven angels with the final seven plagues



## Chapter 16

### • Bowl Judgments:

1. Loathsome and malignant sores
2. Sea turns to blood
3. Rivers turn to blood
4. Sun scorches men
5. Darkness and pain
6. River Euphrates dries up preparing way for kings of the east to go to Armageddon
7. Great earthquake and huge hailstones



## Chapter 17

- Woman (great harlot – apostate religion) sitting on scarlet beast (Antichrist's kingdom)
- Name on her forehead: Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth
- Drunk on the blood of the Saints

Desolation of the great harlot

## **Chapter 18**

- Fall of Babylon the Great
- World mourns and heaven rejoices

## **Chapter 19**

- Great multitude in heaven praising God
- Marriage supper of the Lamb
- Christ on white horse and armies of heaven follow Him to Armageddon
- Antichrist and False Prophet thrown into lake of fire
- Kings of the earth and their armies killed by sword from Christ's mouth



## Chapter 20

- Satan bound 1000 years in abyss (bottomless pit)
- Millennium – Saints reign with Christ for a thousand years
- Tribulation martyrs resurrected to reign with Christ 1000 years
- Satan's final rebellion crushed
- Satan cast into lake of fire
- Great White Throne Judgment
- Lake of fire is final destiny of anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life





## Chapters 21 and 22

- Lake of fire – the second death
- New heaven and new earth
- Holy city ( New Jerusalem) descends from heaven

- River of water of life and tree of life
- God dwells among His people
- Every tear wiped away – no more death, mourning, crying or pain
- Glory of the New Jerusalem described
- Believers see God's face and reign with Christ forever and ever
- Blessing for keeping the words of the prophecy of Revelation
- Warning not to add to or take away from the words of the prophecy of Revelation
- Come, Lord Jesus



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# For More Information

Bill Rudge has produced numerous books, pamphlets and audio messages on a variety of timely topics. For a complete listing or a copy of his informative newsletter, visit [www.billrudge.org](http://www.billrudge.org) or write to:

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